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MILLENNIAL EXPERIENCE;

OR,

God's Will Known and Done.

BY

REV. ALMON UNDERWOOD.

"That ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."—Cor. i. 9.

BOSTON:
HENRY HOYT.
No. 9 Cornhill.

1860

BV4501
.H535

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Gift
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May 14, 1935

Printed by
BAZIN & CHANDLER,
37 Cornhill.

TO MY CHILDREN

Whom I have begotten in Christ Jesus, through the gospel, are these pages specially and affectionately dedicated. With many of you my labors have been short, and it is not likely that you will ever hear my voice again, as it would be impossible to revisit the more than hundred churches to which I have ministered, in seasons of special religious interest. Having many things to say unto you and being taken from you in presence, not in heart, I adopt this mode of addressing you, thus complying with the earnest request of many. As I have witnessed your first victory, I am exceedingly desirous "that ye should walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory," and that ye go on from conquest to conquest. I have no greater joy, than that ye stand fast in the *liberty* of the gospel, and no stronger desire than that Christ be formed in you, the hope of glory. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" My earnest prayer is,

that the experience herein undertaken to be delineated, may be yours, and that through you, the leaven of righteousness may be diffused through the entire church.

THE AUTHOR.

Newark, N. J., 1860.

PREFACE.

To some, the title of this book may appear strange, and the inquiry will be made, "Has the millennium begun, that we should write of millennial experience!" In reply, we affirm our belief, that we shall have millennial experiences before the full inauguration of this, the world's jubilee. The millennium will not be ushered in at any particular moment; but individual Christians will be coming into this state day after day, and year after year, until the full development of the latter-day glory, when the knowledge of the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

There can be no doubt but many persons have had, and are now enjoying this experience in its fulness. The early disciples certainly enjoyed it after the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Their own words prove this, "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." They enjoyed *then* the light which shall characterize the millennial age. Doubtless, it is the duty and privilege of the entire Church of Christ, to possess this experience. As the children of Israel were prevented, by their unbelief, from entering the land of Canaan, which, for a whole generation lay before them in full view; so we stand waiting and hesitating with all the blessings of the millennium held out to us, as our promised possession, into which we enter by faith alone.

In the present work it seemed, in the first place, desirable to demonstrate the necessity for the same spiritual guidance and illumination in our day, which shall distinguish that glorious period of the church. Much space has been occupied in endeavoring to remove, if possible, the objections of many as to its reality and attainability. We have shown that the necessity for this guidance exists in our moral natures, as well as in our circumstances in life.

In the next place, we prove from a variety of considerations, that God has made *abundant provisions* to meet this necessity, so that there is no want to them that walk uprightly.

The third part occupies a greater space than was at first intended. It was manifestly important, not only to point out the conditions of securing divine manifestations, but also to illustrate and develop the peculiar state of mind which characterizes millennial experience, to show it in its different phases, as active, and at the same time, as quiescent, as laboring and suffering, in great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart, and yet always triumphing in Christ, anointed with the oil of gladness, and yet the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It seems as though the real inquirer after light would be more interested in this part of the book than in any other. And this must be our apology for extending it to its present length.

To many, the subject discussed in the fourth part, presents the greatest difficulties. Some may think that it involves a new revelation, or the revival of the days of inspiration. And is it not true that God has been revealing himself to souls anew all along their earthly pilgrimage, giving them new evidences of his love and favor, opening new treasures in his word, and manifesting his will more clearly to them? We are aware there is a great indefiniteness in many minds with respect to the witness of the spirit, how it gives its testimony, and how we are to distinguish its teachings, and whether any sure reliance can be placed upon them. Cannot God teach us so that we

can understand him? There should be no doubt as to the reality of that to which God testifies. Can He not make a thing certain?

The difficulty often arises from a want of experience. The truth is, we know God only so far as we experience him. The impenitent sinner cannot imagine how one can know that his sins are forgiven, as God gives no visible or audible evidence of his presence. But when He comes to enjoy the witness of the spirit on this point, his difficulties all vanish. It is as clear as daylight. So it will be found in reference to this after experience. They are very similar in kind, though differing in degree.

Whether we have succeeded in making this part of our subject clear to the minds of inquirers after the hidden life, we shall leave it for them to judge. We will add, however, that our instructions will appear dark to any one unless he enjoys the teachings of the Spirit. No human instruction can supply the place of this Divine unction in the soul. Our words are as Greek, unless interpreted by the Holy Ghost. If our teaching would answer, there would be no need of the Spirit, and our doctrine would be wholly false. Our object in penning these pages has been to point you to the Great Teacher, and not to divert your attention in any other direction. The Holy Ghost can make this clearer to your mind in five minutes, than

we could in five years. Our aim in this part has been as much to guard the honest inquirer against every false way, as to develope the true one; for there can be no doubt there is danger here, and a mistake might be very disastrous. The traveller to Zion needs to be guarded as well as guided. The last part might be considered unnecessary, as anticipating or framing objections where none might be made. We deem it important, however, to consider some of the more obvious ones which might arise in honest minds who are inquiring for the truth. Some of these might stagger and discourage them from prosecuting their inquiries where there was no real difficulty in the way, no more than in the other articles of their creed, and if for such reasons they throw away this precious provision of the gospel, they might for the same, throw aside every other. Other objections may arise, but we have no room to answer them here It has been our object and aim to furnish light to honest inquirers for the way of holiness, and also to those who were walking therein. We desire to contribute our mite to multiply this kind of experience, and thus help usher in the latter-day glory. We send it forth as the harbinger of a good time coming, as a finger-point towards that day when the sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw its light.

THE QUESTION.

Does the gospel encourage us to expect Divine guidance in the minutest affairs of life, from moment to moment, or does it furnish us with general rules, and leave us to determine from our own reason and judgment and from the providence of God, what specific act or volition we should put forth at any given time?

Does God afford us special directions in some things, and leave us to exercise our judgment in others, not knowing whether it may be in accordance with the will of God or not?

Does He give us general directions and then leave us to *guess* what may be His will in particular volitions and acts, not knowing whether we please the Lord or no? Or has God made provision for our knowing His will at all times, and in all cases, so that we may affirm that we know what is His will, and be assured that we are doing it? This is certainly a very practical question, and one of great importance. If the gospel contains such privileges, every

one ought to know it and avail himself of its advantages. What is so important to us as to know the will of God from day to day and from moment to moment? To meet our responsibilities and to fulfil all our obligations, this knowledge is more needful than any other. No one can be indifferent to this question who has any desire to please the Lord. Hear the first inquiry of the converted Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?" So will every Christian be interested in the question,—May I know the will of God?

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PART I.

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE WILL OF GOD BY HIS SPIRIT, NEEDFUL IN OUR SPECIFIC ACTS AND VOLITIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THIS NEED WILL APPEAR FROM THE INSUFFIENCY OF GOD'S WORD AS A GUIDE WITHOUT IT.

Though it is spoken of as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, and is often explicit and definite, yet it does not specify one thing in a thousand that we are to do, nor does it meet all the wants of a single hour. Where is it revealed in God's word what I am required to do at the present time, under the circumstances in which I am placed? Here lie a dozen ways before me, which I am to take, here are a dozen things to do, how am I to know which, or what

first, or what not to do? The Bible certainly does not tell me; it gives me general rules, but how am I to know their application to all the minutiæ of actual life? We seem to need an interpreter in understanding the word of God and in applying it to our actual wants. For illustration, you may open the Bible and read, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself." Here are requirements which impose obligation upon us every moment; but who shall teach us what they demand at the present juncture, to worship God, or perform works of beneficence; the law itself neither points to the right nor to the left. It says do, and there leaves us to determine what we are to do. Is this question now submitted to our erring judgments and ignorance to decide, or have we a guide in the matter upon which we may rely with unerring certainty? Can any one doubt the necessity for such a guide? The question is not whether God uses our judgment or not, whether we are to exercise our reason or not; this is granted. The Spirit utters his voice through the understanding and

enlightens the conscience. On the very supposition that the law itself does not decide in the case what supreme love to God and impartial love to man requires us now to do. How are we to know, or must we guess what will be the fulfilling of the law under the circumstances? God means to have us act intelligently in the case, and not from any blind impulse. And though the word of God is often quite explicit and particular in its requirements, yet it cannot alone meet our necessities as it does not decide in a given case what is to be done. Nor could it be a sufficient guide, unless it marked out every course and step we are to take in our pilgrimage through the world. We need a teacher to instruct us in the word and to apply it to all our varied wants and circumstances.

The need of such a teacher is often recognized in the book of Revelation, thereby showing its own insufficiency. Said the Saviour, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you." "Howbeit when He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall

not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall he speak and He will show things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you," &c.

If the word of God is a sufficient guide, why has He given us another to teach us its meaning and its application, and why has He required us to pray for its illumination and guidance? This necessity is most clearly admitted by the word itself. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." And again, "That the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Two things at least are implied in this last passage; first, that the Spirit teaches or shows us what the law requires, and in the second place, He begets in us the spirit of obedience, so that when the requirement is made known, we most cheerfully comply with it. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

The same thing is abundantly evident in Christian experience. How little did the disciples know of the word of God, especially of the explicit declarations of Christ, till their minds were enlightened and guided by the spirit of God. When this was done, the whole book of divine revelation lay open before them. They could now understand the prophecies and apply them. The sayings of Jesus are comprehended and known. If they had studied the Scriptures all their days, they would not have understood them as they do now. They are never at a loss in applying them to passing events. They see in the life and death of Christ an exact fulfilment of all the things written and said of Him. The spirit of God taught them and they could but know them. With this interpreter they find no difficulty in understanding the whole book of Revelation, not merely as a work of intellection, but its application to all the varied scenes of life. The word of God is ever at hand to cheer and comfort them amid difficulties and trials and to guide them through new and untried events. We never find them hesitating and doubting, but

they act like men, assured they were doing the will of God. They say, "We cannot but speak the things we have heard and seen."

Our own ignorance and blindness lay the foundation for the necessity of this guidance. We know but little of the present, much less of the future. Indeed we know nothing of the future, but are profoundly ignorant to all its developments. Consequently, without any other help, we are unable to decide intelligently the commonest concerns of life. We may not know how to take even the first step; as we cannot see the future, the first step may be a stumble or a fall; we may do the most unwise thing in the world when we would do right. "I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Several things may appear equally important, and as we do not know the result of acting in a particular direction, what are we to do? Must we go forward blindly and do what comes in our way? The word says, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." But who shall tell us which to do? That tells us for

whom to do it, but not whether to eat or drink or sleep or what avocation to follow. Is the word then a sufficient guide? or do we not need the spirit to apply it that we may act intelligently and know what is the fulfilling of the law, and what is the will of God in our present circumstances. In some way then, that will must be manifested to us.

We are like a blind man, who is told to go forward, but he must have some one to lead him, or he knows not which way to move. Now let a kind hand be stretched out to guide, in which he can confide implicity, he can walk as securely and as firmly upon that plank road as though he had eyes. So when the word of God bids us go forward, we need to have the unseen hand point out the way and show us what to do. We need the invisible spirit to teach and assure us what is the will of God concerning us in the circumstances where we are placed, then we can go on unfalteringly and firmly with the assurance that we are doing it.

Again how is it that people become satisfied that they have passed from death unto life, or

that they have become the children of God? Whence do they derive this assurance? Is it from the *word of God merely*, or from the testimony of the Spirit? What is it that gives that peculiar life and power to the truth of God at times which makes one feel as though he was the one meant in all those gracious promises, and which gives such personality to every utterance of God in his word? The Bible has not changed, the same promises were there before, but there seemed no meaning in them to him. Most manifestly it is the spirit of God giving vitality and power to the written word, and applying it to the individual person, making all the promises of God, yea and amen in Christ Jesus. If the spirit of God is thus necessary in the commencement of the spiritual life, must it not be equally important in its continuance? And if the word of God was not sufficient to inspire hope and confidence, then how can it be in the subsequent life of the Christian? Without the life-giving power of the Spirit the living word becomes a dead letter. We thus establish the insufficiency of God's word alone as

a guide without the spirit, and in doing so, we do not disparage but honor it in assigning it its proper place in the great system of instrumentalities by which the body of Christ is to be preserved and sanctified.

CHAPTER II.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE UNINTERPRETED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD NOT A SUFFICIENT GUIDE.

Some may have already fallen back upon the *providence of God*, as the help needed to make up the deficiency of the word as a sufficiently definite interpreter. "We must judge," say they, "as to what is called for by the circumstances around us, listen to the calls of Divine providence from time to time and study its teachings, and in this way we shall know the will of God." In this way, is not the providence of God often deified as an omnipresent God?

There is no doubt but we may get much light by regarding the intimations of Divine providence, and we should never be indifferent to the light derived from this source. Though the word and providence of God are not a sufficient guide in life, yet we are never to disregard them. They show us our duty with a proper interpreter; they

both need application in understanding them aright.

Is it not true that the will of God often lies directly across the path of his providence as read by erring mortals? If we obey God, do we not have to go contrary to the appearance of things? Our way may seem to be hedged up, difficulties thicken all around us, and we may appear to be entirely out of our place, and have nothing to do where we are, and yet we may be assured that we are just where God designed us to be. His providence may seem to point in another direction; many doors of usefulness opened elsewhere, and we seem to be doing nothing of any amount in our present position; still there may be a strong conviction, farther a perfect knowledge that we are doing the will of God where we are; we may have no more doubt that we are in the will of God, than we have that we are his children. As an illustration of this, take the case of Abraham, who, against hope, believed in hope. The providence of God indicated any thing than the fulfilment of the thing promised. He has some other guide than divine providence.

Take the whole history of the Christian Church; her way has been dark and threatening, and often when her prospects have been ominous and adverse, she has gained her most signal triumphs. When her defeat has been looked for, there has been victory; when her cause has seemed to be lost, there has been a triumph. There are so many illustrations of the above in her history, it is difficult to know which to select. The first propagation of the gospel was made when earth and heaven seemed to conspire together to destroy the very existence of the Christian Church. Here was her greatest triumph. What mistakes men have made who have been governed by appearances, who have taken the apparent indications of divine providence as the real ones! It was generally hailed as a glorious day when the church formed an affinity with the world, and the great Roman empire became nominally Christian, and yet it well nigh proved her ruin. She was all but lost in the wilderness of the world. And when nearly a thousand years of tomb-like darkness had rolled over the world, and ignorance had become the mother of devotion,

as the last glimmering of light disappears, you cry, "She is gone." No. She is not gone. It was only the darkness that precedes the morn. Day approaches, the sun rises, which shall never set again, but its light shall spread over all the earth. It may be said, that the providences of God have not been understood correctly, and therefore great mistakes have been made. True. But have they not always been made when men have had no other guide? Has it not required the anointing of the spirit as much to read the book of Divine providence as the volume of Revelation? Has any one understood it without?

Take your own history as proof of this position. Have you not been often ready to exclaim, all these things be against me when they were only working your deliverance? Has not your way been hedged up so that there appeared no escape, and no path for you to take, yet when you had the presence and guidance of the Spirit, all was light and clear within, but if not, the darkness of the grave seemed to have fallen upon you? Have you not sometimes wondered how everything appeared so clear, when Divine pro-

videnees appeared so dark, when you could not get a ray of light from the surrounding gloom? It was the light of heaven beaming on your soul and dissipating the clouds hanging around. At such times your eye-sight failed you, your past experience failed you, and nothing but the light from above could afford you the least satisfaction. You knew the way, the darkness disappeared from before you, and you passed on, rejoicing in the power of God. Here is something above the brightness of the noon-day sun. It is assurance forever. Others might doubt, but you could not. Often the light within increases as the external darkness grows more dense. How little did the disciples know what God was doing in his providence, and what they ought to do till they were enlightened by the spirit of the Lord. Everything seemed to be against them. Judging from what had been they had reason to expect utter extinction; they had seen their Master crucified, and every effort made to exterminate his little flock. Everything appeared dark and ominous. They could say, "we trusted that it had been He which should have

redeemed Israel." But things did not seem to favor any such expectation then. Appearances indicated anything else sooner. A few days pass and they receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit gives them a new sight, and those apparently untoward providences are full of hope and triumph. Each unfolding leaf gives promise of something greater and still more glorious. They see in the passing events the fulfilment of Heaven's design in the redemption of the world. The pillar of cloud which had appeared so dark, now becomes luminous as the noon-day sun. They can triumph right amid the most trying scenes. They take joyfully the spoiling of their goods; for they know that all things work together for the glory of God and the redemption of the world. There is an entire change in their views and conduct. What is the secret of this change? You may ascribe it to inspiration or to the gift of prophecy? Whatever it may be, no one will deny but the spirit of God is the cause, enlightening their minds and giving them an insight into the nature and spirituality of Christ's kingdom, such as they never had before, and

passing events are in perfect keeping with the rest. Understanding things with the aid of the Spirit, they can even count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations. They go to prison singing, and in death they "see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." They see the hand of God in every event of Divine providence as it passes. And have we not the same promises of guidance in understanding the will of God in his providence which they possessed? Are not the promises addressed to *us* as much as to *them?*

As the will of God often lies directly across the path of his providence as interpreted by people without the enlightenment of his Spirit, it must be expected that we shall often have to act contrary to the appearance of things. "For we walk by faith and not by sight." "The just shall live by faith." This, indeed, is the grand point of distinction between the righteous and the wicked. The one has a guidance, a divine knowledge of things not known to the other.

While we urge the necessity of the Spirit to guide us, we do not object to a proper regard of

Divine providences, but we would inculcate the idea that we must have the teachings of the spirit to understand them aright. While mindful of what God is doing around us, we should implore the illumination of His spirit, and receiving this we may go forward unhesitatingly, though providences may seem to point the other way. This has often been illustrated in Christian experience and will be again and again.

Moffat's sojourn in West Africa affords a clear illustration of this thought. For eleven long years he continued his missionary labors among a pagan tribe without the least encouragement from their conduct. They insulted and robbed him, threatening his life again and again, and at no time showing the least interest in his labors or desire to be benefitted thereby. Everything seemed to be against him and not to encourage any results; still he remained, with the strongest assurance that he was just where he ought to be; as well convinced that it was the will of God he should be there as if hundreds had been turning to the Lord. He knew it. How did he know it when the providences of God seemed to be

against him? By the witness of the Spirit within witnessing with his spirit that he was doing the will of God. At length the promised day came, and with it the blessing of salvation to that heathen tribe confirmatory of the genuineness of his former convictions. He had no doubts before, but now the voice of Divine providence which once seemed to contradict his convictions, speaks most decidedly and decisively in their favor.

The history of the Reformation under Luther and his coadjutors, abounds with these illustrations, and shows conclusively they had some other guide than that furnished them in the providence of God. See the calmness and assurance of Luther when everything around portended destruction. He had light when others were enshrouded in darkness. The Spirit enabled him to read passing events differently from the rest of the world. It is not his superior wisdom or experience, but a Divine illumination given him to understand what God is doing, just as one receives the evidence that he is born of the spirit of God. He is not misguided by Divine providence, because he has

an interpreter in the Spirit of what God is doing. In such cases others may think we act very unwisely and strangely, perhaps, and yet we are perfectly satisfied that we are acting in accordance with the Divine will. This has been acted over again and again through the whole history of the church. If then the appearances of things and the indications of Divine providence may not be a guide, we certainly need the manifestations of God's will through another channel. The history of prayer in personal experience abundantly illustrates this same truth. How often have the people of God had perfect assurance that God had heard prayer and granted the blessing sought, when every appearance seemed unfavorable? The probability grew less and less, while the assurance grew stronger and stronger. Perhaps it was prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the church. The suppliant at length received perfect assurance, but there was no indication of such an event in the state of Zion. The apathy and indifference to say nothing of its obliquities and infidelity, never appeared greater. The members

of the church seemed to have no heart for the work. Things grew more trying and unpromising, yet his assurance did not abate but gathered strength by the trial. This might have continued for days, weeks, months, yes, even for years. At length the promised season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord came, and more than was expected was realized in that work of grace. Such has been the history of many a revival. One suggests itself to us just at this moment

Some few years since, in one of the enterprising villages of Connecticut, as the pastor of the church returned home from making some parochial visits, he found a member of his church sitting at his door, Bible in hand. He was not a prominent member, nor had he been particularly active. He had occupied his place in the house of God without awakening any special attention by his devotion or faithfulness in the community. He was one of those harmless sort of men who help to fill up the ranks of an army without adding much to its strength and efficiency. He was known to be in the church, and this is the

most that could have been said of him at this time. After compliments had been passed, opening his Bible, where a leaf had been turned down, he began reading a precious promise, adding, "We are going to have a revival." The pastor replied, "that is an encouraging promise," and started, as though he would enter his house, at the same time, inviting him to follow. "But stop," said he, opening his Bible, where another leaf had been turned down, and reading, again adding, "We are going to have a revival." And this he continued for some time, reading passage after passage, till he had read some of the most prominent promises of God's word, adding at every successive reading, "We are going to have a revival." The church was in a very cold and backslidden state without the least promise of a gracious work. He proposed a morning prayer-meeting, and at the first meeting he secured the attendance of two others, after waking them up. The same apathy prevailed in the church without the least apparent improvement. Still he was sure, "We are going to have a revival." A neighboring pastor whose labors

had been very much blessed, was invited to preach for several successive evenings without any encouraging results. The prospect only darkened, and external appearances forbade any encouraging expectations, still he remained as sure as ever, "We are going to have a revival!" The pastor's faith and courage at length failed, and he said to his people publicly, he could do nothing more for them in improving their spiritual condition. The providences of God seemed to be entirely against them; at length spring business was at its height, the cares of the world were never more pressing, and everybody was unusually busy, still he was sure, "We are going to have a revival." Nor was he disappointed. God opened the way for the introduction of other means and men, and His spirit accompanied their efforts with His blessing. The revival came, and it was a reviving indeed to that church. It was a time of great heart-searching among God's people, many gave up their hopes and afterwards came into the liberty of the Gospel. Several heads of families indulged hopes, and many of the precious youth were converted, fully verifying the

assurance expressed. That prayer meeting, so poorly began, became at length filled, and the house would hardly contain the multitudes who came together.

What was it that gave such assurance and confidence when the providences of God appeared so forbidding; when nothing seemed to encourage any such expectations? Most manifestly it was the spirit of God awakening and energizing his mind, and enabling him to appropriate and apply the promises to the existing state of the church and community around him. With this additional light, or with the spirit of God as his interpreter, the book of divine providence seemed to speak a different language from what it did to others not enjoying this unction. In this view faith begets a stronger assurance than sight, inasmuch as one depends upon the word of God, made *ours* by the spirit of the Lord, while the other depends upon the appearances of things which often deceive and mislead. What knowledge can be more certain and absolute than that imparted to us by the spirit of God? We often find simple hearted persons expressing such a degree of assur-

ance as to confound infidelity itself. It explains fully how it was that the primitive disciples expressed so strong an assurance. They say again and again, "We know." And it is the true language of all genuine Christian experience.

Perhaps it was prayer for an individual object, for a wayward son. At length you were enabled to prevail, you gained perfect assurance that God had heard your prayer, and you could rest upon the assurance with entire confidence. You had no doubt of it. Still your son appeared more wayward and reckless than ever. He seemed fully bent upon his own ruin. Judging from appearance there was no hope. You were an astonishment to yourself, that you could remain so composed and assured under the circumstances. You might have been even tempted to think yourself presumptuous. Still you trusted God, and had the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing your expectations fully realized, and all your hopes fulfilled.

CHAPTER III.

NO AMOUNT OF EXPERIENCE A SUFFICIENT GUIDE IN MAKING KNOWN HIS WILL TO US.

If it could be proved at any period of our lives that we had gained such a knowledge of the divine will as made it manifest from our experience what we were to do, it might still be argued that we needed the spirit of God to guide us into all truth in acquiring that experience. Even in this case, then, we could not dispense with this agency. But it so occurs in the providence of God, that no amount of previous experience will suffice in teaching us the divine will in the different exigencies and vicissitudes which arise. It never happens that we are in precisely the same condition twice, nor that the condition or sphere of two persons is so similar that one may take the other as a pattern or guide. God never repeats a thing, in order to educate our faith and teach us the necessity of depending upon His teaching in all the cir-

cumstances of life. He never placed but one man in the condition of Noah when he destroyed the world, nor him in that condition but once. He never tried another man as he tried Abraham, nor him but once in the same way. He never made but one Moses, but one Samson, but one David and Daniel. He conducts every one through a succession of incidents and trials in his pilgrimage through the world, all of them various and peculiar in their character and circumstances. No one can review his past life without being impressed with this truth. If we were to remain in the same condition, there would be no need of faith or of guidance. But the truth is we are constantly changing our position, so that the light we had yesterday will not serve us to-day, any more than the food we eat to-day will answer us to-morrow. We must have fresh supplies or we famish. So our present light will not answer our future demands. Of the future we know nothing, of the present we know but little, unless we share the teachings of the divine spirit. What do we know of the bearing of this or that act upon the history of our race. We may think

it is not of the least importance whatever, while the most momentous results hang upon it. The link may be a small one, but it is needed in the long chain of human events. Every act, however small, has its place in the great drama of life. With this argument we meet those who oppose this doctrine, that God needs to manifest His will to us in all the minutest concerns of life. Why not, since the greatest events have hung upon apparently the smallest. The desire for a single gratification of the appetite, introduced sin into our world and all its concomitant evils. Unhallowed marriages of the sons of God with the daughters of men, occasioned the first great apostacy, which well nigh ended in the total destruction of the world by the deluge. The theft of a strolling priest introduced idolatry into Israel, which in time became general, and led to the captivity of the ten tribes, and to their final dispersion or annihilation among the tribes of the earth. We need not multiply instances where the most trifling thing in itself have been the origin of the greatest revolution. Under such circumstances, where every step we take may have a lasting and

controling influence upon ourselves or upon others, do we not need an efficient and sure guide to guard and direct our every step, and show us what and when to act. The consideration gives awful dignity to human life, well calculated to make one stop and seek for divine aid and guide in all undertakings.

We are continually passing through new scenes where our experience can afford us no relief. We need to be taught of God as much as we ever did, and often the mature Christian *feels* his need of divine teaching more sensibly than in his early experience. He becomes increasingly conscious of his own blindness, and exclaims with Bunyan, "What a fool I am, Lord, I hardly know truth from error." As the path of the just is a progressive one from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, he needs divine illumination more and more corresponding with his growth, qualifying him to meet the new trials and responsibilities which arise. In the early stage of Christian experience trials were comparatively light and of short duration, they only lasted a few moments, or a few hours, or days. But in

process of time, if the adventurer be a growing Christian, they become heavier, severer, and longer, —they last weeks, months, and even years. It matters not, for the light increases and the triumph is more glorious. In himself he is as dark and ignorant as he ever was, but in the illumination of the spirit his course is far more light and glorious. He sees now what he was once blind to; God has opened his eyes, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. It is not his former experience which he now enjoys; he has one far more rich and glorious, new manifestations of God's will to his soul. To him the above proposition is perfectly evident, and he confesses he has no light only as he receives it from the Lord, and but for this he would neither know which way to go nor what to do. As it is, the path seems perfectly plain, marked out by an unseen hand, the duties of life designated by unerring wisdom, and a willingness and alacrity in doing them, begotten and quickened by an energizing and all controling power that "works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is not the word and providence of God merely, nor our own experience

which makes the way so plain and easy, but the ever blessed spirit to enlighten and mould our hearts into the divine image. We do not discard those other helps; the spirit brings them all under the control of His power, so that they become entirely subservient to His will and purpose. He uses all of them, more effectually to accomplish this work. If the expression may be allowed, experience enables the spirit more easily and effectually to make us understand the will of God in our present circumstances, as any increase of knowledge on any subject aids us in comprehending it. But without this quickening and enlightening force, we could never know with any assurance what is the will of the Lord. We should be in a wilderness without guide or compass to point the way, though we may have traversed the wilderness before. Your former experience cannot now decide your course. New objects engross your attention, and new by-ways occur in your path. There are turns and changes to make you need a guide as much as you did when you first entered the wilderness. It is precisely so with the Christian traveller. He can never safely dispense with

his guide at any stage of his journey. Untried scenes await him, new dangers threaten, and new temptations arise; new conflicts must be encountered, and new victories won. He needs the same omnipresent and powerful friend who has attended him through all his perils and conflicts, and enabled him to come off more than conqueror through him that loved him, and gave himself for him.

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION I.

THE VERY DEFINITION OF A RIGHT MORAL ACT INVOLVES THE NECESSITY OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

Such an act must certainly be an intelligent one. If it is the consequence of some blind impulse or of some lucky guess, it lacks at least one element of a right moral act. It cannot be obedience to God, for, upon the very supposition, it could not have been to please God; for the actor did not know what was the will of the Lord. Your intentions might have been ever so correct, but as you did not know it was pleasing to God, it cannot be said in truth that you chose his will. You chose something that might be or might not be his will. You thought the probabilities were in favor of considering it the will of God, but you did not know it. How, then, can it be said in truth that you chose the will of God. You did not know but that the act might be highly dis-

pleasing to God, the very worst thing indeed that could be done for the interests of his kingdom. You meant right, while you knew not whether it was promotive or subversive of the best interests of his government. Can a moral act be right which contravenes the divine will, and subverts the divine government? Then disobedience may be right, and secure the plaudit welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant." What could you mean, while you did not know the thing meant? You hoped you intended a definite thing, but you did not know the thing intended. If intelligence and knowledge be not necessary to a right moral act, why are not idiots and brutes responsible agents? They possess voluntariness, one element of moral conduct; but they want a knowledge of right and wrong, and, therefore, no more responsible than the machine which moves at your bidding.

Now, does God require men to obey him, without manifesting his will to them? Does he not first reveal it, and then require men to obey? Was not the law of Paradise first published before obedience was required? And is it not the uni-

form course of God in his government to reveal his will before he holds his subjects responsible for their conduct?

If, then, his will is not sufficiently manifest from his word and providence (as we have shown), is it not then needful that it should be made so by some other arrangement in his government? *To do* right, we must know what is right, and choose the good as the supreme object of choice, and no other.

SECTION II.

SUCH KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO MEET OUR MORAL WANTS.

We are so constituted that we cannot feel complacency in an action that does not include in it all the elements of right moral action; that is, the idea of an action as intelligent, as voluntary, as tending to the greatest happiness of others, and as tending to the greatest happiness of the agent. If it lacks the first requisite, certainly we cannot be satisfied with it. We never can feel complacency in any act that proceeds from a blind impulse. We must know the good was designed and perceived. What praise-worthiness could there be in an unintelligent and unmeaning ser-

vice? We never thank the horse that carries us through in safety, nor the lightning that passes us by in its destructive course, nor the rod that screened us from its power. They did us essential service; but their agency was a blind and unintentional one. To be susceptible to praise or blame, there must be knowledge and intention. To feel complacency, we must see the good and choose it, the evil and avoid it. Who would ever reproach himself for doing wrong when he had no knowledge of the right? "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It is the rejection of the light which occasions self-reproach, setting at naught the known will of God. On the other hand, we can feel complacency only when we are conscious of knowing and doing the will of God. We cannot feel satisfaction in a doubtful action. "He that doubteth is damned (condemned) if he eat." In such a case, we stand condemned before our own conscience; and if our conscience condemn us, God is greater than our conscience, and knoweth all things. Thus knowledge is an ele-

ment of virtue or of vice, and is obedience to the known will of God; the other, disobedience to the same. Neither can exist without it. Here lies the very foundation of heaven and hell, in the nature of things, — the consciousness ye knew your duty, and did it, or the dreadful self-reproach *ye knew your duty, and did it not.* To be sure, in the former instance it is all of grace, in the latter grace despised, and Heaven's counsel rejected. From the one arise hallelujahs, from the other wailings forever and ever. Thus the necessity of knowing the will of God from moment to moment lies deep in our moral nature.

SECTION III.

IF WE ARE TO LEARN THE WILL OF GOD FROM HIS WORD AND PROVIDENCE, OR FROM EXPERIENCE ONLY, OUR WHOLE TIME MUST BE CONSUMED IN ASCERTAINING IT, AND WE SHOULD BE HINDERED FROM DOING ANY THING ELSE.

We are here considering the will of God concerning us every moment and hour of our life; not the will of God in general, but as applied to all the minutiæ of life. The question is to be decided all the way along, and if we are to deter-

mine it from moment to moment as above, where is the room for action? Much, at least, of our time needed in execution must be wasted in this manner. It used to appear to me if one was wholly given to God, his constant inquiry would be, "Lord, *what* wilt thou *now* have me to do?" By learning the ways of the Lord more perfectly, we understand the subject differently. We find a principle in the kingdom of Christ, by which one is in a great measure relieved from this immense tax. The Spirit of the Lord guides, the will of God is manifested from moment to moment, so that there is little else for us to do but that will. It is just as though you had a kind, and an all-wise friend present at your side, to tell you what to do and where to go. You will not understand us now as arguing that we are to throw aside the Bible, sound reason, and the providence of God, to listen to some blind impression, or to some *ignis fatuus* of the mind. We suppose the spirit of God uses sound reason, directs and enlightens our intelligence, throws light upon the word and providence of God, so that we can with ease decide what is the will of God. This is done in a perfectly natural,

and not in an arbitrary manner. No one knows, or can know, the will of God so easily and so certainly as he who abides in Christ. While others are inquiring and guessing and feeling their way along, light and glory shine about his path. Said the Saviour, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Every one else may doubt and hesitate, but he moves forward confidently, with alacrity and delight. The path of life seems to open before him so plain and unmistakable, that he runs in the way of his commandments. He has but little else to do but to lay himself out for God and a perishing world. What a wonderful provision, necessary for our success and usefulness in this world!

CHAPTER V.

THIS NECESSITY EVIDENT FROM THE LIVES AND CONDUCT OF THOSE WHO ARE DESTITUTE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

As the necessity of divine revelation is proved by the character and condition of the unevangelized world, so is the necessity of the manifestation of God's will demonstrated in the same way by the character and conduct of those destitute of this guidance. The great mass of professed Christians, seem to have little or no knowledge of God's will as here maintained: they would say any one would be presumptuous to claim it. The most they can say is, that they mean to do his will, but as to affirming that they know what his will is, they dare not. They have no assurance or certain knowledge on the point, and hence they have to act upon uncertainties. Their whole course is a blind one. They grope in darkness even at noonday. They talk of following the word and provi-

dence of God, forgetting that the Bible refers frequently to the unerring guide. Under these circumstances, is it strange that the church itself presents such a picture of imbecility and inefficiency, of inconsistency and imperfection? The doctrine of Christian assurance is hardly recognized by the body of the church. The most they can say is, they hope; they are afraid of deception. They are on no sure foundation, vascillating between hope and fear. In such a state, what can they do for others? They are self-condemned, or too careless to give any sign of spiritual life, having a name to live, while they are dead. Nor is this all. In their blindness and doubt, they were liable to be led into error and sin, to be turned aside from the paths of righteousness into by-ways and pitfalls, like a mariner at sea without star or compass to guide him, who is in constant danger of running upon rocks and shoals, and thus being wrecked, so they are ever liable to be ensnared and overcome. As they have no sure guide, every object about them may mislead and confound them. The allurements of the world and of worldly society, may draw them away from God, and drown them

in perdition. What protection have they from the wiles of the devil? They have renounced the only ground of security, and are now at the mercy of the winds. Where they will be stranded, no one can tell. It may be on the rocks of infidelity, or upon the cold marsh of antinomianism. They are following they know not what. It is certainly not the spirit of God, for that speaks the language of assurance. One has run into this error, another into that. Some are seeking their pleasures in the world, to the great disparagement of religion. Others are mingling in the grosser vices of the community, to the great damage of souls. How unlike the primitive church in their devotion and lives! The modern type of Christianity would lead one to inquire, Is this the representation of him who was crucified? Are these the successors of those who counted not their lives dear unto themselves? It cannot be denied but that there is a great declension from the primitive standard. The Bible description of Christian character will hardly answer for the church in these days. Where do we find there the common parlance of professed Christians, "We hope we are Chris-

tians, but have a great many fears," "We hardly dare hope," "Have a great many doubts," and many will even say, "We have no hope." How different from Bible experience. The writers there speak in the most positive terms, — "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "We know we have passed from death unto life," "I know in whom I have believed." The reason is obvious, having discarded the idea of knowing the will of God, they do not know positively any thing else; blind themselves, they know not where they are going. When one turns away from the light, he must grope his way along in darkness. Not having the witness of the Spirit to show them the will of God from moment to moment, is it strange that they should not have the witness of the Spirit to affirm that they are the children of God? Both are intimately connected. At a given time, we certainly cannot have this assurance, unless we are conscious of being led by the Spirit of God.

Here is the beginning of the low state of piety in the church. A revival of religion always increases the assurance. Christians seem to know where they are, and what they are doing. In

truth, without this divine illumination, this manifestation of the will of God to our souls, what *are we*, and what can we know of our condition? And how can we know what to do? Interest declines, and we are enshrouded in darkness. What darkness! It is midnight to the soul; all is dreary and desolate. Feeling no interest in the things of God, why should not the mind become engrossed with the trifling things of earth, and run after lying vanities? Having forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, it hews out for itself cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Worldliness becomes the crying sin of the church. Some of its members indulge in the grosser vices, and become steeped in wickedness, while the most gigantic sins of the age find a shelter under its folds. If any thing is saved from this general wreck, it will probably be through the fires of persecution, or the furnace of affliction. They come forth purified as gold, fit for the Master's use, and willing to be taught by the spirit of God. They can say, they know whereof they affirm, and testify what they have seen. A remnant is saved, according to the election of grace, and they become the

seed of the church. Such were the early disciples, "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power. Such language hardly comports with the present condition of the church. The reason is evident; they know not the will of God; they are not led by the Spirit of the Lord, and so all is desolation and death. Can any one doubt but the church must be filled with the knowledge of his will before it can be restored to its primeval power and glory, that she may shine forth clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible to her opposers as an army with banners?

As we now turn to the condition of the impenitent world, the picture is even more dark, with not one ray of light to cheer the gloom, "dead in tresspasses and sins." The plainest things in God's kingdom are not apprehended or known. To say nothing of the manifestation of the divine will by His spirit, how little do they know of the meaning of the written word. They neither com-

prehend their own sinfulness nor the grace of forgiveness; they are in nature's darkness. This every one confesses who comes to the light, he is amazed at his former sottishness and blindness. Many take great complacency in their lives, when they have never done one thing pleasing to God, and their whole conduct is infinitely abhorrent to Him. What gross and inexcusable ignorance, right amid the full blaze of Gospel light! Yet it is so. Like Paul they are alive without the law, —let that only be revealed to their consciences as the commandment was to his, they would die as he did. All their hopes would be slain. As it is even external, worldly morality, they regard as obedience to God, and purely selfish forms of charity as meritorious before Him. It is astonishing to see upon what flimsy foundations men build their hopes of heaven, sometimes upon a little selfish fear, a few anxious thoughts, a superficial conviction, external compliance with some church ordinance, or upon the performance of some religious duty. This may be said of the more thoughtful among the impenitent. What then can be said of the ungodly world in general?

What awful skepticism; what utter indifference; what deadly hate; what filthy lusts; what abominable wickedness; what rank infidelity; and what downright atheism! A cage of unclean birds, a generation of vipers, a world of iniquity. Endeavor now to enlighten this darkness by the external word—having ears they hear not, and having eyes they see not—pour upon them the awful threatenings of God's word, and they are no more moved than the tenants of the grave. They rush on reckless and insensible, as though they would defy God and contemn the Almighty. See what the world is without the knowledge of His will. Now let the spirit of God reveal the law to that soul, let Him discover its spirituality to that mind. What a change! The careless sinner trembles, the infidel shakes, and the atheist turns pale as he foresees his doom. Like Belshazzer, he now reads intelligibly the hand-writing of the Almighty; the day of vengeance is coming, he *knows* it, he quakes before it. The hand writing was there before, but he did not understand it; there was no meaning in it. How little do men know of the will of God till thus mani-

fested by the Spirit; how little of sin until convinced by the Spirit. But for this the world would sleep on to the judgment, and we should never comprehend the law of God till we read it amid the fires of the last day. And if it is so necessary to show us our doom as sinners, it is equally necessary in leading us in the way of righteousness. How silently does the blessed spirit come in, begetting in us the spirit of obedience, so that when He shows us the precept, it is just what we love to do, running in the way of His commandments.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRAYERS OF CHRISTIANS ACKNOWLEDGE THIS NECESSITY, HOWEVER THEY MAY DENY IT IN THEORY.

There is no one thing which people pray for, more than for the spirit of God. Nor is this strange, since it is one of the blessings which God has promised to give in answer to prayer. "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to *them that ask* Him." How could a promise be fuller or freer? It is evident from the manner in which it is given, that it is a blessing very much needed, and one that should be universally enjoyed. If not, why should it be singled out from all other mercies, as though it was the chief of the whole, and perhaps including all others in it. It seems to imply that this would be the great burden of their desires, when His children approached the throne of grace, as though nothing else could

be so much needed. Believing this, and encouraged by the promise, we should expect then to find Christians asking for the Holy Spirit oftener than anything else. Why so, if not more needful? As we have already shown in reading the word of God, they need the spirit to interpret and apply it to the ever varying incidents of human life; in understanding divine providence they need the same guide to teach God's design in them, and their duty in respect to them, and to make known the will of God from moment to moment. Take the ordinary prayers of Christians, what so common as to find them asking for this blessing in some form or other.

Indeed, the Christian church began its existence by making this the burden of their petitions, while they assembled in that upper room, and God vouchsafed His promise by that wonderful outpouring of His spirit on the Day of Penticost, by which the infant church was reanimated and quickened for the glorious work before them. Here we have a fit illustration of the very thing intended by our proposition. Previous to this baptism of the spirit the disciples were ignorant

and blind, they neither understood the prophecies of the Old Testament, nor the faithful and familiar instructions of Christ. He had often tried to make them understand the prophecies relating to Himself; He had described His approaching sufferings and death, but their minds were dull. To the very last they were anticipating a temporal kingdom, when He would restore it to Israel. "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." How ignorant of the very nature and principles of His kingdom. But now, when the spirit comes, their eyes are opened—they begin at once to comprehend and expound the prophecies; they now understand the character and mission of the Saviour; they see the great work to which they are called, and they go to it as men who feel their responsibilities to God. The night is passed, the darkness has broken away, they walk in broad daylight, there is no hesitancy nor doubt in respect to what is to be done. They act and speak like men who know the will of God, and are determined to do it, come life or death. Nothing except this could have given them such life and power. Account for

their conduct in any other way, and you fail to give a satisfactory reason for it. They do not go, guessing or trying their way along. They live and act in a state of assurance, and certainty produced and sustained by the spirit of God. We discover no long and protracted study in knowing the will of God. They seem to understand it at once, as it were, by a kind of moral intuition, by a second sight, where the invisible becomes an object of perception, as much as the visible to the eye of sense, only there seems to be more certainty and assurance about it. You would be less disposed to doubt what they say, than you would what other men see. Their whole lives and conduct show a positiveness or assurance of knowledge which you find no where else. It is not merely the knowledge of the Bible, this they had before, but no such knowledge as that; it is not the providence of God, for this book had been open before them, and certainly not any acquired experience, for they were every hour passing through new and untried and most trying scenes. They are no more disconcerted and troubled than though they had spent their lives among them.

The secret of the whole is, God has heard prayer for His spirit, and the blessing has come in all its glorious reality. The truth and will of God are as clear as a sunbeam ; the blessed Comforter has come to teach and guide, to reprove and warn, to cheer and comfort, to bless and save, and what more shall we say. It is said the Greek word (παρακλητος), translated comforter, means much more than is implied by that name, and that there is no word in the English language which expresses all that is meant by the original. In our opinion there are no ten words that do it. In this office the Holy Spirit undertakes the whole work of redemption, and you might as well present every phase of this work and of Christian experience, as to give a nomenclature of the offices of the Spirit. He is light when darkness is to be met, He is knowledge when ignorance is to be confronted, He is comfort where trouble overwhelms, He is joy where sorrow weighs down, He is assurance where doubts prevail, and everlasting blessedness where death and despair reign. But it is our object here to show mainly His office in making known the divine will. This the early dis-

ciples enjoyed in answer to prayer for the Spirit. They showed that they felt their need by their supplications for the blessing, and they received what they desired, and their after course demonstrates it was the manifestation of God's will by the Spirit for which they plead. Their lives were a commentary on their prayers, as they had what they sought for. And if they needed such a manifestation do we not? Are we not surrounded with similar temptations and trials? Are we not as blind and as ignorant in view of the future and in respect to the responsibilities of life? Do we not have to contend with the world, the flesh, and the devil? Why do we not need then the whole armor of God, that we may withstand the wiles of the devil, and having done all to stand? If what has been said under a former head be true, no one can doubt the need of a like manifestation of the Spirit. The church needs this divine unction as much as ever the primitive disciples, and for the want of it she is languishing, her energies are paralyzed, and her influence crippled. The state of the world calls for the most strenuous efforts, and for the most decided action, yet how can the

church meet the demand without this anointing for the work? We need something more than another Pentecostal season, inasmuch as there is a wider opening, and a larger field for action. The nations of the earth are waiting in expectancy of the glorious day, when the church arrayed in white robes shall stand forth in her power and glory, with the Prince of Peace enthroned in her midst. The promised day has not dawned, the year of jubilee has not begun, but there is a general expectancy that the time is not far distant. And what do we need for its consummation but the baptism of the Spirit?

As evidence that the prayers of God's people acknowledge the need of these manifestations by the Holy Spirit, we would adduce the inspired prayers of the Bible. It might be said the prayers of the church are no evidence on this point, as they may pray for very improper things, and thus acknowledge a necessity where none exists. This objection can not lie against the inspired prayers left on record in the word of God. Besides, these prayers possess more than common interest in showing us what we are to pray for, and what is

the work of the Holy Spirit, which we should desire and expect Him to do. Here it will not be our object to multiply quotations, but to refer to cases that prove the point beyond a doubt.

Take the prayer of Paul for his Colossian brethren, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be *filled with the knowledge of his will* in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness." This is the blessing which Paul asks for his brethren in so many words, "filled with the knowledge of his will." This he specially desired and prayed for, which he would not have done if it had not been needful. He asks it as the chief thing. Two things, at least, are implied in this prayer: first, that it is a practicable thing. The Holy Ghost would never have moved him to ask for his brethren what he did not design to give them: this would be trifling in the extreme. Then

men may be filled with a knowledge of his will, and this cannot mean less than that the will of God should be manifested to them continually as they need to know it.

The second thing implied in the prayer is, that it is a needful thing. It must certainly be so in the eye of him who prays for it, or it would be solemn mockery. Paul well knew its importance for the welfare and efficiency of the church.

What less than this can be meant by that notable prayer found in Eph. iii. 14–21: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be *filled with all the fulness of God*," &c. This certainly must imply a knowledge of his will; for no one can be filled

with the fulness of God without knowing the heart of infinite Love, and entering into his counsels and work. No one can read this prayer without feeling that every blessing that could be mentioned is included in it. Not one thing is omitted that could perfect the child of God. What a petition! "*Be filled with all the fulness of God.*" There is no such thing as going beyond such a desire, nor asking for any thing greater; and there should be no falling short of this, or asking any thing less.

PART II.

GOD'S PROVISION FOR MAKING KNOWN HIS WILL IN ALL THE AFFAIRS OF LIFE.

It might be said, we admit the necessity of divine manifestations, as maintained in the first part. But the necessity is one thing, and the fact another. It must be shown that God has made such an arrangement for manifesting his will, to meet the case, and answer this necessity of our being. If this cannot be proved, the necessity remains unrelieved, and we are left to pursue our dark way along, amid the doubts and uncertainties of life, whether relating to the present or future. Under the circumstances, however, this admission is an important one, as the truth of our present proposition can be established from it by an argument *a priori*.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

THE FACT OF THIS PROVISION.

As we have shown, the manifestation of the will of God is a necessity to meet our moral wants, then we say, by reasoning *a priori*, that *he has made this provision in his kingdom.* As God has provided for every possible want, so that there is no lack to them that walk uprightly, this being one, he must have provided for it. This argument derives special force from the nature and character of the gospel. One grand design thereof was to remedy the defects, and meet the wants, occasioned by sin; so that where sin abounded, grace might much more abound, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. This being the design of the gospel, we cannot suppose such a necessity as we have shown this to be has been left unprovided. Far from this, it

stands prominent as one of the chief provisions of the gospel. What is there that we need to know so much from moment to moment as the will of God concerning us, to meet our high responsibilities, and fulfil all the duties and obligations of life? And, indeed, without this, we cannot be prepared to meet any of them. Hence, this necessity involves the doctrine here maintained, and we need no extended argument to prove it, as it grows out from our actual wants. It is useful, however, to examine the grounds of the provision, especially since there is such a general skepticism on the point. Then, again, the examination can only unfold the rich and the wonderful provisions of the gospel to quell our fears, and stimulate our hopes, to encourage us onward in our conflict with the world, with the flesh, and with the devil; that we may come off more than conquerors, through him that loved us, and gave himself for us.

SECTION II.

THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE REQUIRE IT.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" When we say justice requires that the will of God

should be manifested to us from time to time, we mean not that God is under obligation to us, but that the necessity of the case is such that the eternal principles of righteousness require such a manifestation; that there could be no justice in requiring obedience, where the law to be obeyed is not known, and cannot be known. This principle meets a response in every bosom, and is alike one of the immutable principles of the divine administration. When has God required any one to do without telling him what to do, to obey without making known what he is to obey. Look at the first act of disobedience in our world. The law of Paradise is first published with its awful threatening before obedience is required, and it was the known, wilful disobedience to it which brought death and woe to our race. The law of Sinai is not enforced till published and made known to those who are required to regard it. With what exactness and precision is the precept uttered, and the penalty annexed. Transgression is the wilful disobedience of the command. And so you will find it all through the history of divine providence. The Saviour, the expounder of the law, recognizes

this principle fully and frequently. He said to the Pharisees, "If ye were blind, ye should have had no sin; but now ye say, *we see*; therefore your sin remaineth." Then again, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, &c." The same principle is recognized by the Apostle in his letter to the Hebrews. "Of how much *sorer punishment* suppose ye." The idea conveyed is that guilt is proportioned to the knowledge or light enjoyed, and consequently to have guilt at all, there must be some knowledge. Every principle of justice requires it, and every one's conscience acknowledges the validity. God has so constituted the human mind, that it everywhere acknowledges and acts upon this truth. No one could ever reconcile the opposite with the idea of justice. If He does not reveal His will to us, or if we cannot know it in a given case, ignorance must be a valid excuse for the transgressor. The very fact then that the requirements of God are specific and particular, and extend to every moment of time, proves that He must have provided for knowing His will in every case. In truth, every attribute in the divine character requires this.

His system of government would not be perfect without it.

SECTION III.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY REQUIRES IT.

This position may be said to follow directly from the foregoing one. Of course there can be no responsibility where there is no justice in a claim. Every principle of our being revolts from the opposite. We feel justified in not doing, if we do not, or cannot know what is to be done, and how it is to be done. This principle is illustrated every day before us. Hear what that child says, "I did not know what to do, or how it must be done, or I did not know better." The meaning is, the child cannot be blamed for not doing beyond his present knowledge. The ignorance may be culpable, as he might have enjoyed the means of knowledge but neglected them. But if he was diligent in the use of the means, and still was ignorant, no responsibility can be affirmed in the case. And this is what the child means when he offers his reason. He knows if it is true, it must be a valid excuse.

We act on the same principle in all the affairs of life. We hold each other responsible in proportion to our knowledge, or in proportion to the means of knowledge enjoyed; the degree of light measuring the extent of responsibility. In the same manner we hold ourselves responsible, we reproach ourselves for the violation of known law, of admitted principles, while we feel no blame in view of unavoidable ignorance.

In truth this principle is fully recognized by the law of God itself, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, &c." That is, we are required to love God at any given time with all our capacity, with all our present ability. Light or knowledge is one of the elements which constitute our ability. It always enters into every calculation of human responsibility, whether he be a heathen or a Christian. The law itself then requires that we should know the will of God from moment to moment, in order to be responsible for doing it.

The Saviour has very beautifully illustrated the same principle in the parable of the talents. No one is responsible only for the talent given, and

consequently for the knowledge or light possessed. If one has no knowledge, (of course we include the means of knowledge), then there can be no responsibility.

The same principle is recognized by the Saviour in his remarks upon Capernaum and Bethsaida. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them. The reason is evident, they enjoyed so much more light—they saw His works, were witnesses of His glorious miracles, which proved Him to be the Messiah, the anointed of God, and therefore imposed upon them the obligation to believe him. "He who knew his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many, while he who knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few." In the latter case, we are not to suppose there was no absolute knowledge at all; for then the case would be manifestly unjust. The meaning is, less knowledge, a moderate degree of knowledge, in that case, he shall be beaten with few stripes. The Saviour meant here to recognize the great principle of moral government, that every subject would

be responsible for the knowledge possessed, and that guilt would be in that proportion. Accordingly we must be able to know the will of God from time to time, in all the minute circumstances of life, to be held responsible for doing it. In some way or other then the will of God must be manifested to us, so that we may say, we know it, to be personally and continually responsible. The fact of our responsibility no one doubts, who recognizes a God, or a law, and a law-giver. From this must follow the truth of our proposition.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROMISES OF GOD PROVE IT.

This is a kind of argument which few will oppose. Then, again, if there is such a provision in the kingdom of God we should expect it certainly to appear among the promises found in the Bible; for they embrace every want in our being, and are adapted to all the circumstances of life. If this divine guidance or manifestation of the divine will be found among the promises, then it would appear as though every child of God would embrace this provision, as a precious legacy from his heavenly Father, and henceforth avail himself of its advantages. How can one be content to throw away a certainty for a doubt, the guidance of an unerring hand for a blind guide? We proceed to quote some of these promises.

Psalm xxxvii. 23. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way." Also, 31st verse. "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."

Isaiah lviii. 11, "And the Lord shall guide thee *continually*, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Isaiah xxx. 21. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left."

Psalm xxxii. 8. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."

Psalm xxv. 9. "The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way."

Psalm xxv. 14. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.

Psalm xlviii. 14. "For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

Proverbs iii. 6. "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."

Isaiah xlviii. 17. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go."

Jeremiah iii. 4. "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?"

Psalm lxxiii. 24. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory."

Isaiah iv. 5. "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night."

Isaiah xxxv. 8. "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein."

Hosea vi. 3. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

John viii. 11. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

There are many other precious promises on this subject, which might be quoted in this place, and some of which are even more explicit. We prefer, however, to quote them in another section, where the special agent of these divine manifestations will be shown. They belong more particularly to the present dispensation, under which we live, and under which this glorious provision of the gospel is to be enjoyed in perfection. We mean the promise of the Father that his Spirit shall be poured upon all the earth, and the world shall be illumined by its effulgent glory.

These promises are well worth a careful examination. They certainly guarantee the closest supervision and the minutest guidance. So far as our course in life is concerned, they lay it out with the greatest particularity, and mark every step of our progress. They pledge not merely protection against taking the wrong way, but they insure the right; not merely against falling into error, but they promise positive guidance in the truth. They leave no one who believes them in darkness and doubt in regard to his course. They point the way with unerring certainty, to those who listen to this divine teaching.

Many see no definite and particular instruction in these promises, with respect to the minute circumstances of life, as they have always looked upon them as general, intended to insure the safety of believers in their final perseverance, and ultimate salvation. In their view they determine results, but not the means by which the results are secured. Indeed many never apprehend a particular God. They believe in a general God. They conceive him as sitting on the circle of the universe and swaying the sceptre of universal do-

minion over worlds, sometimes condescending to look at the nations in some of their mighty revolutions, fixing the boundaries of empires, but never to interest himself in the minute affairs of life. They cannot conceive that God should ever regard *them*, caring for all their wants and guiding them in all their ways. They may sometimes even conceive of God as determining their general course, directing in the great changes of life, but they have no idea of God as watching over all their movements and marking all their steps. But such is the God of revelation and of providence. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice and the hairs of our head are all numbered before him.

But let us see what these promises teach. They pledge to show us the way we should go. "That thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." To teach us the way all along our earthly pilgrimage, implies the minutest care and direction. The course of every one must be diverse from all others. There are no two lives alike.

Our missions and commissions are all different. There are no two persons appointed precisely to the same work. Each has his own to perform, and his own way to walk in.

Hence, if God appoints and shows us this way He must mark it out minutely, we must know all the turns and windings for ourselves. We cannot walk in another's path, nor imitate another's doings. We must know the course God designs for us, our individual sphere; nor this merely as a general thing, but we must be shown every inch of our course. We are not clocks to be wound up, and then told to go right forward till the spring ceases to move. We must have the spring and the direction constantly given. We cannot go eight days, nor even twenty-four hours, nor one hour, without a new impulse and control to tell us whither. Like the traveller, our way is constantly diversified and changing. Every hour has its duties, and every moment its cares. We are passing along continually, and new scenes are opening before us. Under these circumstances, we need a voice behind us, or within us, calling us this way and that, to the right or to the left. The idea of

showing us the way, thus includes the minutest direction, such as alone can be given by some one right at hand, constantly making known His will and revealing His purposes. This God most explicitly promises to do. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee, in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Remember it is God's eye that guides, that never slumbers, always awake to every interest, and ever on the alert when danger arises. He is never surprised; no unseen emergency baffles Him. All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. How evident that no other being could guide us or teach us in the way. It is not in us to direct our steps. We know our wants and necessities. And here we have them met in the provisions of grace. These promises show what are the provisions, and they supply just what our necessities demand. Committing ourselves to the guidance of the Lord, we need not shrink from any responsibility, or fear any danger in our course, but listen to that voice behind us, "This is the way, walk ye in it. Never fear the lions nor the giants; no, nor all the powers of earth

and hell, for He who speaks is stronger than the whole. If God tells us to go, we may go unfalteringly, and do valiantly for the truth.

Some of us can look back upon our course, and see how wonderfully we have been guided, how differently from our own plan. We have found another one drawing the plan, mapping out our course, threading out our way infinitely wiser and better than our own. Man deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.

In addition, it is a highway, cast up expressly for the ransomed of the Lord to walk upon. The idea is, it is made conspicuous, so that the traveller need have no doubts nor difficulties in ascertaining the way. There it is right before his eyes, and he has only to walk or run straight on. It is none of your plane roads, where there are frequent turn-outs or by-ways a little diverging from the main path. It is a high road thrown up for the accommodation of travellers to Zion. Is there not a clear intimation here, that the will of God shall be manifest to those who walk in the light, that they shall not be in doubt and perplexity in respect to the way? More, is it not affirmed that

the way is so clear and apparent, that those who walk thereon shall not err? "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." We know this is often quoted, as though it read, *need not err therein*, but the text is more explicit and positive, shall not err therein. And it has a qualification which even increases this assurance. It says, those shall not err who would be most likely to get out of the way on account of their simplicity and inexperience. "The wayfaring men, though fools," that is men of very ordinary capacity and acquirements, simple-minded men in the eyes of the world, such as would be most likely to get out of the way, even they shall not err. The will of God shall be so plain, that the feeblest intellect, whose heart is pure, shall know and understand the will of God. This knowledge is not confined to learned commentators of the written word, nor to men versed in the history of divine providence, nor to men of long and enlarged experience, but also to mere children in knowledge, such as one would think it would be most difficult to guide in the way. The Lord can lead them unerringly from step to step in their course. The promise

asserts in the most unequivocal language, the direct absolute guidance of God, and the absolute security of such as walk on this highway. Bear in mind, God says it, "Shall not err therein." The safety of such is as certain as the faithfulness of God. The pure alone walk thereon, and they alone have the cheering promise of divine protection.

Thus teaching the way, and guiding the traveller, implies the minutest supervision, the most careful protection of one in his course, such as alone one can have who enjoys the manifestation of the divine will to his soul. He must know from time to time, and from moment to moment, what the Lord desires him to do. He cannot know the way without this, as no general way can meet the individual wants of any one. In the very nature of the case his way must differ in some measure from every other one, and that part must be made known above every other in its minutest points. It implies direct personal knowledge to the soul, teaching it what is to be done and what is to be avoided, where to go and where to stay, when to speak and when to be silent, just as the occasion requires.

In the minds of some, such promises do not imply so particular guidance, so minute teaching. They have been wont to look upon them as more general, determining one's general course, deciding questions mainly in reference to results, and not the particulars which form the results. Way, means general way; course, means general course; and guidance, means general guidance. But these promises are even more minute in their language, they mention the smallest divisions of the way, the minutest portions of one's course. They talk of ordering our very steps. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." We do not know how it would be possible to express more minute guidance. They mark every step of our progress, they show us where to place our foot. How can such language mean less than that the Spirit of the Lord reveals His will to those who are thus guided from moment to moment, as they pass along their earthly pilgrimage. There must be some unseen monitor whispering behind them, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right and when ye turn to the left."

There certainly can be no other guidance so

clear and so particular. The word of God, though very explicit, fails in a thousand instances to mark our course. We may have the spirit of obedience desiring to do the whole will of God, yet we can find no satisfactory answer to the question, What shall I do? from the written word, it neither says right nor left, this or that. We consult the book of divine providence, and we may find that equally silent. I refer to my diary to learn what experience says; that, too, has no counsel to give, for I am placed among untried scenes. In any emergency where am I to go, which way shall I look? Where, but to God? There are His promises, I can plead them. And how shall He teach me, but by His invisible Spirit opening my eyes and enlightening my mind in the question at issue, and making my way clear before me. Hither we go when everything fails us, and why not avail ourselves at first of this resource, and depend upon this guidance continually, believing that He will order all our steps.

If even these promises are not sufficiently definite and minute to include the guidance here maintained, the promise says farther, "And the

Lord shall guide thee *continually*." This must meet the whole case, and leave no moment unprovided for. There is no lack to them that walk uprightly. These promises prove beyond a doubt, God's special and particular guidance of all those who walk in him. The only possible objection, then, that can arise from the view here taken, is, that he guides them blind-folded, without letting them know his will or showing them their duty. Can any one think that God would be honored by such blind service? Can the wants and necessities of his children be met in this way, by guessing his will? Upon this plan they must know that God guides and that they guess right. And how would this differ from actually knowing his will? In either case, if you believe in the absolute certainty and faithfulness of the promise, you must believe in the manifestation of the Divine will to the soul. In the one case, the subject does not perceive it as his will, but does it; in the other, it is known and done. The one represents God as a kind and tender Father, making known his will wherever there is a spirit of obedience, wherever he perceives there is a filial spirit; the

other represents him tyrant-like, leading them blindly on, making them fulfil his will without their once knowing, it is his will which they are doing.

We have quoted one promise (which may be called a prophecy) which illustrates this idea of guidance most beautifully. "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night." This Divine lead is compared to the manner in which God guided his people from the house of bondage to their promised rest in Canaan. He led them as it were in person, making his presence manifest among them by a pillar of cloud by day and by a pillar of light by night. When that moved they moved, and when that rested they rested, always present when needed. They could have had no doubt as to their way, for it was all marked out for them, they had only to walk in the light thereof.

Such is the guidance which God promises and vouchsafes to his people. It is no blindfold lead. It is an open, daylight affair. He even makes

the night radiant with light, thereby foreshadowing a clear and an intelligent manifestation of his will to his people. Their way is marked out and their very steps ordered of the Lord. A glorious light shines round about them even in the midst of darkness, so that they walk in the light. This, then, is the illustration we have of this Divine guidance.

Thus the Saviour declares, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He has an indwelling Saviour, Christ abiding in the soul. "For me to live is Christ." His path is that of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

What is it to walk in darkness, but to live in doubt and under condemnation; not to know where you are or where to go; groping your way along without guide or sight? It is to have the moral vision darkened, the spiritual eyes blinded. "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Who does not know that this is the state of the world in general?

They are shrouded in darkness as though there was no sun in the moral heavens. The next step may be a fall. Not so with one who follows Christ. He shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The way is plain before him; the will of God is manifest; the Saviour leads the way, and he has nothing to do but to follow step by step. It is not a general direction he gives and leaves him to guess the way as best he can among a thousand by-ways and turn-outs, but he gives him specific and present guidance, so that he cannot err while he follows his Lord. He has the precious promise from him that he will never leave him nor forsake him.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPIRIT'S SPECIAL GUIDANCE.

It is the special office of the Spirit to manifest the will of God to those who consent to be guided by its light. We should expect to find the most direct and explicit promises connected with this agency, as they all centre around and derive their efficiency from it. Christ said to his disciples, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." Here is a guidance both general and specific. It must include every truth useful and necessary for us, in all the circumstances in which we may be placed. It includes not merely the truth contained in the written word, but that which needs to be manifested to us under all the circumstances of life. It is particular and universal guidance. The Saviour is even more explicit in describing the office of the Spirit.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,

whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Saviour had said a great many things to his disciples concerning himself, and concerning his kingdom, which they did not understand. Though he had plainly told them of his sufferings and death, and of his subsequent resurrection, yet they did not understand him. They were even now looking for a temporal kingdom, sitting on the literal throne of David, delivering Israel from the Roman yoke. They were not in circumstances or in a state to comprehend these things. See now the office of the Spirit in respect to them as an illustration of his work for us. How did they acquire all at once this wonderful aptness and facility in expounding the word of God, and in understanding passing events. The whole is accounted for by the illumination and teachings of the Spirit. As they pass along, the will of God is manifested to them by the Spirit aided by the providence of God. Though they are called to pass through new and trying scenes, the way seems perfectly clear before them. They are never thrown into

doubt and perplexity by the unexpectedness of an event, they know just what to say and what to do as each juncture arrives. By the teachings of the Spirit they are prepared to meet every trial and every responsibility. Do you admire their courage and intrepidity, their wisdom and power in meeting their adversaries and triumphing over all opposition? Be not deceived; the work rather pertains to the unseen agent, all enlightening and all controlling, which moves and guides them. Under his power, timid and fearful Peter, afraid of his own shadow, is converted into a moral hero, not daunted by the boldest champion of hell. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." You may call this inspiration if you please, but it is the inspiration that every child of God may have who will yield himself to the complete guidance and control of the divine spirit. If our trials and circumstances are different from theirs, we may expect the Holy Spirit can just as easily prepare us to meet ours. The gift and power of the Holy Ghost were not an

apostolic gift merely but designed and promised to the whole church. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This same baptism of the Spirit, this same illumination the whole church may have and we have shown that they abundantly need it. The spirit of God can make everything plain, can give us clear insight into the word of God, and help us to understand his providence, thus revealing to us his will as he did to the primitive disciples. The Saviour exalts the office of the Spirit in this respect, even above his own.

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." A little after he says again, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth:" It is evident from these and like texts, that the Saviour regarded the presence and manifestation of the Spirit of more importance and interest than his own bodily presence among his disciples. His departure,

with the consequent mission of the Spirit, would be a greater blessing to the church. The advantage presented especially is that he could better teach and guide them. The event proved the truth of the Saviour's remark. How much better did the disciples understand the character of Christ, the work of the atonement and the nature of his kingdom than they had done while the Saviour was with them. They seemed to get more light on these subjects in a few moments, under the teachings of the Spirit than they had received from the repeated instructions of Christ, during the three years they were with him, and had he preached to them forever they never would have had the light which the Comforter furnished. This may be accounted for partly on natural principles. It would be more easy for one to exhibit another's character than his own. You can conceive it possible to derive a greater insight into the character of one by a few marked points, than by years of association. In a world where selfishness reigns, there is a peculiar difficulty in exhibiting one's own character. No representation would be received as from another person. Aside from these considerations, the Spirit

has other facilities for the manifestation of truth, which the Saviour incarnate did not possess. His agency is purely spiritual, bringing truth to bear directly on the mind, without those diverting influences which attend visible presentations. Unseen, he comes in and quickens, energizes, enlightens, makes everything manifest, so that you are surprised it should appear so clear. You cannot tell how it is done, you can scarcely give the operations of your own mind by which the subject has become so transparent. Perhaps you can only say you know it is so, and no human power can make you believe otherwise. This assurance may have reference to your state, or it may have reference to your course of life, the assurance can just as easily be applied to the one as to the other. With the early disciples it is equally conspicuous in both. They never express doubts in respect to their personal condition, nor are they undecided and hesitating in action. They are prompt and bold, as though they knew just what to do under the circumstances. The whole is accounted for by the presence of the Spirit to guide and to teach. Notice, he is emphatically called the Spirit of truth, as though it

was his special prerogative to present the truth to us, and what is the manifestation of God's will but the truth applied to all the varied circumstances of life, and this we need more than anything else to meet the responsibility of each moment as it passes, and this is what may be said in guiding us into all truth. The manifestation of the will of God to his children is, then, one of the offices of the Spirit. And it is a most sacred and important trust, and one that should greatly endear us to the blessed Comforter.

Consider the trials, the self-denials, the conflicts, the temptations of life. How various, how severe at times, how prolonged, how unexpected, and sometimes overwhelming! Look at the history of the church; what scenes of conflict and trial she has passed through, guided and sustained by the Comforter. Christian, review your own history, and see who has defended you from the shafts of the adversary, who has guarded you against the wiles of the devil, who has solved your doubts and cheered you on under discouragements and supported you under trials, upheld your languishing body, made all your bed in your

sickness, more than supplied your bereavements, and made your path like that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. There is but one answer to the whole. The Comforter. As he guides into all truth, he will not withhold any useful truth from us; and what so useful as to make known to us his will at all times. What does each of us need to know most, at the present juncture, but the answer to the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And will God withhold the answer, when it is the office of his Spirit to communicate that knowledge? How exalted the privileges of the disciples, who enjoyed the instructions of the Saviour face to face, and hung upon the lips of him who spake as never man spake, and yet it would appear that we have a more exalted privilege, in the fellowship of the Spirit than even this. We have something better than an external guide; an indwelling Spirit, ever-present and all-seeing, to make known the whole will of God, and give us the spirit of obedience to do it. In doing this, we are not to suppose the Holy Ghost sets aside our reason in his work. No. He uses it, he enlightens and guides

it. Nor does he dispense with the word and providence of God. He employs them just as he employed the instructions of the Saviour to his disciples, to render the truth more clear and more easily comprehended. He uses all the agencies and instrumentalities within his reach in making the will of God manifest, not setting aside any that may be useful. The one guided by the Spirit has truly an enlightened understanding; it is no blind impression. Things appear in their true light. He has a tact or aptitude of discernment to perceive what the circumstances require, which no one else can have, who is not thus guided.

This view of the office of the Spirit is fully corroborated by the instructions of the apostles in their epistles. Says John, "But we have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." In no place have we claimed more than this, and does not this fully corroborate the view

taken? One might infer, as the teachings of the Spirit was so full, so particular, and so general, that human teaching might be dispensed with wholly; "And ye need not that any man teach you." This would be a most manifest perversion, as the letter itself would contravene its own instruction. The writer wrote this epistle to teach his brethren certain important truths. The anointing they had received, did not dispense with the necessity of writing them this epistle. The Holy Spirit took this way to instruct them and us. In the same manner the Spirit of the Lord uses the written word, and uses men to present the truth to each other, as the best mode to communicate it. Thus, preaching is ordained as one of the means of making manifest the will of God. It is one of the auxiliaries which the spirit employs in his official work in making known his will to his people. When we say this, we would not give the impression there was not a most important truth contained here in this instruction of the apostle. In the anointing referred to, there are great advantages, most exalted privileges, in understanding the will of God, in knowing the

very things the Lord would have us do. So much so, that they who have received it, are said to "know all things," and "they need not that any man teach them." The mind becomes greatly illuminated, the spiritual eyes opened to behold wondrous things out of the law of God. What was dark and obscure before, appears now clear as the noon-day sun. As they pass along, everything appears so plain, they can have no doubt what to do. The thing to be done is right before them as it were, beckoning them on, and when that is accomplished, the next to be done is just as manifest. To one thus enlightened, there is a natural order of events, so that one follows another without the least clashing. If thrown into some unlooked-for emergency, the way, though hedged up with difficulties and dangers, when the moment arrives, is open, and one passes on, knowing and doing the will of God. Under this unction, there is a moral intuition by which one seems to know at once and without difficulty, what is the will of the Lord. He has no doubts, and he is amazed to see others hesitating and undecided, while the way appears so clear and open to him.

Wonderful knowledge! amazing light! And yet how easy it comes, and how strangely imparted! It serves us more satisfactorily than any knowledge acquired by the closest application, or by the most assiduous study. We feel a heart-felt delight in action, so well assured that we are doing those things well-pleasing in his sight. Can anything be plainer than that God has made provision for knowing his will from moment to moment, what that provision is, and who the chief agent in the accomplishment of this work? Especially is it so, under the present and last dispensation of his grace, which is designed to be the perfection or consummation of those means which God has been using for the redemption and salvation of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW COVENANT BLESSING.

THIS BLESSING IS INCLUDED IN THE NEW COVENANT.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be a God to them, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor—and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest. I will be merciful to their unright-

eousness and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more." What could be clearer or more to the point? This covenant was promised to His people of old, and to be fulfilled under the present dispensation of His Spirit to the church. It is sometimes called the last days or latter days. We have no authority from the word of God to expect another dispensation; the present is evidently the best, under which all the great and glorious things foretold by the prophets are to have their fulfilment. We expect changes, but not in the dispensation; revolutions in the state of things under the same dispensation. The promise, then, of this new covenant belongs to our times, and Christ is waiting for its fulfilment in the faith and lives of God's people. Whatever is promised in this new covenant, belongs to our times, and if this is fulfilled we have the exact thing here contended for, "I will put My laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts." Here is an allusion to the old covenant at Sinai written on stone. The new one is to be written on the mind and heart of every believer; that is, the Spirit will make known the law or will of God to His saints, as He wrote the

law of Sinai on tables of stone for His ancient people. He will make the one as manifest and as clear as the other. He will not only teach the letter of the law as he did then, but also its spirituality, and give them the spirit of obedience to do it. In begetting in them the spirit of the law, He shows them the precept, and it is just what they love to do. There is no bondage in it. It is not a system of legal restraints, but one of most perfect liberty. The manifestation of the will of God, and the spirit of obedience, are simultaneous and co-existent, so that you can hardly distinguish between them. The law is no sooner written there than it is done; thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This is the blessed privilege of those who live under the new covenant and share its blessings. It does not alter the case if many prefer to live under Sinai still, and tremble under the burning mount. There is a better inheritance for the people of God. He offers to make a new covenant with them, that they being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteous-

ness before Him all the days of their life! They may have the law written in their hearts, the will of God manifested to them in all their future course. Who will neglect such a privilege or contemn such blessings?

CHAPTER V.

THE PROVISION PROVED BY BIBLE PRAYERS AND THEIR PROMISED ANSWERS.

The prayer taught us by the Saviour is directly in point. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." How can the will of God be done in earth unless it is known? The prayer itself implies that there is an arrangement made for making known the divine will, that God has provided means for teaching us his will. This is done in heaven, and all bow before it. We are taught to pray that the same may be done in earth. We may suppose the dwellers in glory find no difficulty in knowing what is the will of God; being in a benevolent state, they know, as it were, intuitively that will. It requires no laborious study to know it. Much in the same way we suppose God manifests his will to those who obey him, only it may be communicated through organs of clay. We cannot see how any one can take the ground

that the Saviour ever designed this prayer should be answered, without admitting the doctrine we advocate, that God makes known his will to those who abide in him in all their specific acts and volitions. As all must admit this to be an object of prayer, and if an object of prayer, the promises to prayer must all be applicable to this, and thus the very object is secured for which we are pleading. If asked in faith, the blessing is sure. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Will any one deny that this is not a blessing to be desired of the Lord? If it comes within the province of prayer, then it is an attainable object.

The notable prayer of Christ for his disciples before leaving them, proves as much as this—"that they all might be one; as, thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made per-

fect in one." This perfect oneness with Christ, and this glory with the Father, implies this blessing, that is changed into the same image from glory to glory.

The prayers of Paul are equally conclusive on this question. He prays for the thing definitely in so many words, that his brethren "might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," and that they may be "filled with all the fulness of God." Paul prayed for no impracticable object; for that would have been trifling with God. He asked only for those things which God had provided for his children, and what they most needed. Again we are instructed what to do if we lack this knowledge, and the instruction shows the existence of this very provision. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith." How could such a promise be made in sincerity, when no provision, such as we maintain, has been made in the kingdom of grace? The promise implies the largest provision, the most liberal preparation to meet all possible wants of the kind,

such as are perfectly consistent with the terms and conditions of the gospel given elsewhere. Truly, there is no lack to those who know the power and efficacy of prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

GOSPEL PRECEPTS REQUIRE IT.

MANY OF THE PRECEPTS OF THE GOSPEL REQUIRE THIS KNOWLEDGE.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." How could this be possible without a knowledge of his will? Does God require us to obey, without making his will known? Can a blind and unintelligent service be acceptable to the holy God? If not, there must be provision in his kingdom by which all his obedient subjects may know his will, and delight in his commandments.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy." This is a similar requirement to the one we have just considered and involves the same principles. Can holiness be affirmed of a blind service or of a doubtful obedience?

Take the law as epitomized by Christ; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and

with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How could this be possible unless one might know what this supreme love to God requires him now to do, and also what this impartial love to his neighbor required at his hand? Without some intelligent and wise application of the law to our present circumstances, we are just as much without law as though the decalogue had never been written. We are in a quandary every moment of our lives—we can neither turn to the right nor to the left. Thanks to a kind Father, we are not left in this state of suspense. The law itself recognizes every provision as existing, which we maintain. To love God with all the heart, implies only the exercise of the knowledge we possess in a given case. Knowledge is one of the elements of power by which our capacity is determined, or it is the measure of our responsibility. The will of God must then be revealed to our intelligence, to become the object of obedience. And as the gospel has made provision for its fulfilment, see Rom. viii. 3, 4, "That the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but

after the Spirit," it will follow God makes known to all such, his will in the circumstances of responsibility where he requires them to act.

CHAPTER VII.

ACTUAL ATTAINMENT.

Some of God's people have enjoyed this provision, have had the will of God manifested to them while *passing through their earthly pilgrimage.* You perceive the argument here, is actual attainment. If it can be shown that one has attained this privilege, it needs no lengthy argument to show that others may, as the provisions of grace are free to all, especially under a dispensation where all the exceeding great and precious promises of the Bible are to have their fulfilment. It would seem, then, that what has been done under unfavorable circumstances, can be done again under those more favorable.

Our first case for illustration, we select from the earliest records of the world, one that lived and flourished in the infancy of our race, when there was no written word to peruse, and no resplendent examples to follow; when no gospel

was preached, no Christian ordinances were instituted, and when ungodliness and infidelity attained a fearful ascendancy over the world. Such an example at such a time must possess an extraordinary interest, and hold a lofty pre-eminence among the elect. The history of this saint is brief but comprehensive, short but full of interest. The life of Enoch was an extraordinary one, as well as his translation from earth to heaven. God signalized his extraordinary life with an extraordinary end. Let us see now, what his life teaches us in respect to the subject under discussion. Gen. v. 22. "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methusaleh three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters; and Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him." Heb. xi. 5. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God."

The phrase, "walked with God," is descriptive of Enoch's piety, and in this respect distinguished from other saints. It denotes a most intimate and

familiar relationship and intercourse with God in his earthly pilgrimage. No language could intimate a closer communion and fellowship. Their walk is together in the same path, and like two intimate and confidential friends, the thoughts and will of one are known to the other. Then, again, it is not an occasional interview and then a separation for a season, with an occasional meeting; but it is continued for three hundred years, and then only transferred to another sphere, eternally perpetuated in glory. Can this language mean less than the privilege we maintain? As he walked with God his will must have been manifest to him all along his pilgrimage; such intercourse could only exist where there was the closest union and affection. This is evident from the testimony Enoch had, that he pleased God. And how could he please God without knowing and doing his will? We are not informed how God manifested his pleasure in him otherwise than by his most extraordinary removal from earth to heaven. It might have been by the witness of his Spirit, or it might have been by some visible manifestations by which God showed his pleasure

in his life and character, to his cotemporaries. By whatever means it was done, he gave Enoch the strongest assurance of his pleasure in him. Here, then, we have a notable example of God's manifesting his will to one of his servants, through a long life, walking with him, and making his course and his end glorious, like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Our next case for illustration, is the shepherd boy, the sweet singer of Israel. His life was a most eventful one; often exposed to the greatest peril, requiring the greatest wisdom and resource; demanding the utmost prowess and deliberation, and sustaining the highest responsibility. We rarely find him halting and doubting. Even when a fugitive in the kingdom of Israel and his life hunted like the partridge of the mountain, and he is driven from hold to hold with his vagabond followers, he acts as one conscious of being guided by an All-wise but unseen Hand. His every step is marked out before him. He is no visionary, but in every sense practical in his whole career. See him at Ziklag; the camp is burnt, his wives and children are carried off captives, and

his own immediate followers talk of stoning him. He encourages himself in God. Guided by his hand, he pursues the enemy, and recovers all. The same wisdom and power mark his whole career. If we attribute this to his native genius, we shall greatly err. The hand of God is manifest everywhere, and it is in this way that he is prepared for every emergency. God says to him, "I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked." God guided his steps, so that it is not strange that it is said of him, "And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him." He is anointed king over Israel, as the man after God's own heart; as one who would fulfil all his will. We have the strongest testimony to this peculiarity in the character of David, where his great sin is mentioned as an exception to the general rule, thereby endorsing it in other respects. "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

The testimony of God in respect to King Josiah

is remarkable, proving the provision we maintain. "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses." This we have shown to be impossible, except as that law is applied to us from time to time, so that we may know what it enjoins. If, then, Josiah thus served the Lord, with all his heart, he must have been guided by the Lord. We do not propose to multiply cases, but select only a few for illustration.

The life of Paul is convincing evidence of our proposition. How else account for that wonderful change, and his remarkable life. His whole course shows an abiding witness, a constant manifestation of the divine will to his mind. There is no doubt or hesitancy in respect to his course. It is all marked out for him as clear as a sunbeam. The scenes of his life are chequered and varied, the world is his field, but he knows into what part he should go, and what is the work before him there. Amid perils of every kind, he passes along in perfect security, accomplishing the great work

to which he is called. His testimony in respect to himself in this point is clear and conclusive. "For me to live is Christ." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live is by the faith of the Son of God." The idea conveyed here is that the life of Christ is lived out in his, so that he acts as Christ would in like circumstances. His life is completely identified with Christ. This is his whole course, and he says at its termination, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Can any one doubt how this was done? The Apostle has not left us to surmise—"by the grace of God I am what I am." Thus, we have demonstrative proof that the will of God was made known to him in his whole Christian course, and it cannot be affirmed from his conversion to his death, that he ever did in a single instance disregard the will of God. You cannot put your finger upon a single act and say, there he disobeyed His will. It will be said in view of this case, well he might; for he was inspired. The case of the beloved disciple is equally conclusive. Though a man of a different

temperament, the triumph of grace is equally conspicuous and thorough. All his powers are brought under the control of the divine will, and they are constantly in most delightful harmony with it. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." ("For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." The same objection may lie against this case as the former. And we have no particular objection against calling this the inspired state, if you will not be misguided thereby in its meaning. It is never worth while to be alarmed at names, and it is always best to use such terms as convey to the mind most accurately the idea intended. If you mean by it that it is a state, not generally attained by the primitive church, and one not now attaina-

ble by the people of God, then we differ in ideas, and not in words merely; for if the epistles may be regarded as giving us the true state of the church, they did generally attain this state. See the 6th and 8th chapter to the Romans—"But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness." See 1st Epistle of John. Again, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is useless to multiply quotations on this point as they are so numerous. They show most conclusively that this state was not confined to the apostles, to a few men who had what is generally termed the Spirit of inspiration, but it belonged to the church in general, at the time when the promise of the Father began to be fulfilled to the Christian church. Great wisdom and grace rested upon the whole body of believers. Christians were led by the Spirit of the Lord, and they triumphed in God. We will illustrate this view of the church more clearly in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MILLENNIAL PROVISION.

IT IS THE PECULIARITY ESPECIALLY OF THE MILLENNIAL STATE, AND THEREFORE IT MUST BE A PROVISION IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." What is the glory of the Lord? Moses prayed that God would show him His glory. In answer to the prayer, God gave to him a manifestation of His character and attributes—he revealed to him His goodness. The moral perfections of God are His glory. What is then the knowledge of His glory? It is not hearing about it, or reading the words written about it. No! It is the knowledge of it in our own souls, it is having it manifested to us by His Spirit, revealing His will, making known His power and grace to us. If these ideas are not sufficiently definite and intelligible take an example.

The Saviour generally illustrates truth in this way by parables, i.e. imaginary incidents, such as might or would be likely to occur, and one they would understand. We will endeavor to make our thoughts intelligible by real cases. Almost the same words occur in describing the experience of the early Christians, as we find in this prophecy, predicting the triumph of Christ's universal kingdom. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, *hath* shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." They possessed this knowledge of divine glory, hence their experience will give us the idea of the millennial state, and we have shown that the manifestation of the divine will was the peculiarity of Pentecostal days, when the promise of the Father was fulfilled in the outpouring of his Spirit upon the early disciples. And it characterized the entire movement of the regenerated and sanctified church. Under this baptism of the Spirit, they went forth to the salvation of the world. Then the millennial state is nothing more than to have this baptism of the Spirit general. "The earth shall be filled," &c. The earth is here

personified for its inhabitants, every one filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, young and old, all filled and each filled, Satan chained, this world the dwelling place of the righteous, and one halo of glory encircles the globe. Even the distant vision of this glorious period, so enraptured the mind of Isaiah that he breaks forth in most exultant language: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth, and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory." As the apostolical prophet looks, he sees them gathering from every point of the compass and he cries out, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" The world know the will of God and they do it. The prayer so often made is at length fully answered—the will of God is done in earth as it is done in heaven. What a day? No one shall say now, "know the Lord." The day of Pentecost was but a fore-taste—a fore-shadowing of what is to

come — a specimen-view by which to form our ideas of the millennial state. And why may we not look for many more such manifestations of glory before the glorious day shall be ushered in, amid the songs of the redeemed. Those who believe in this golden age of the church, do not believe this state of things is going to be brought about at once. Some will begin to understand this provision of the gospel and embrace it.

Others will hear of the clusters of the goodly land, and they will enter in and possess them. Thus the leaven of righteousness will spread from church to church, from district to district, from country to country, and from continent to continent, till the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. In all this there is no new provision in the kingdom of Christ; the church has only come up to its high and blessed privileges. The promised land lay before her centuries, and yet she had not faith to enter it. And so she has wandered about in the wilderness of *Sin*, till generations after generations have perished, without entering this Canaan of blessings. Must another generation die without the borders? You blame

the unbelief and stupidity of God's ancient people, in not entering the promised land, and yet here is a land promised the church, richer than ever Canaan was, and entered by the simple exercise of faith; not by any long and wearisome pilgrimage, and yet you will not come in and enjoy the promised rest. Strange inconsistency! Nothing can be clearer than that the provision is made whereby you may know the will of God and walk in the light and glory of the Lord, if you will but embrace it. We have the blessings and glory of the millennial age held out to us. Do you doubt it? Tell me what blessings are promised to them in that age, which are not to you in this. To see how many talk and act on this subject, you would almost suppose we were to have another Saviour hung on the cross, the dispensation of another Spirit before the millennium would dawn. And yet here we are, with all the privileges and glory of the millennial year upon us, languishing; the church famishing, surrounded with all the rich luxuries of heavenly grace, and praying for a future millennium, when she turns her back disdainfully from the very blessings she is coveting, and

complains for the want of a morsel to appease her hunger. You want the millennium, while you will not let it come into your own heart, and kindle up the fires of Divine love! What inconsistency! What change are you looking for in the dispensation of mercy, ere that happy day dawns upon the world? Remember God giveth not his Spirit by measure. He is more willing to give it, too, than we are to give good gifts to our children. It is not owing, then, to illiberality on the part of God. The blame, the whole blame is laid right at your door. And shall your unbelief longer stay the blessing and shut out the dawning light of the world's jubilee? Shall the church stand gazing and watching for the light of earth's prospective redemption, while she rejects the very provision which shall constitute the strength and glory of millennial ages?

It is evident that God has had His mind very much upon this completeness and fulness of redemption in the whole history of the world. We find it included, and made most prominent in the covenant which God made with Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be

blessed." This is certainly a kindred prophecy with that found in Hab. ii. 14, of similar import, and of equal extent. Though quite remote in their dates, they possess the same general character, and show that this prophecy is no new thing in the counsels of eternity; that God has had His mind set upon it.

The renewal of the same covenant with Isaac and Jacob confirm the same view. The oath and promise are repeated to them in about the same language. As His heart was set upon its accomplishment, so He would have His people keep the same thing in mind from generation to generation till its full realization. He alludes to the same through all His dealings with His ancient people.

See the confirmation of the same to Moses. "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." This promise was renewed to Moses under peculiar circumstances. The children of Israel had sinned and greatly displeased the Lord, and He was about to destroy them; Moses interceded, and prevailed, and the Lord repeats this glorious promise, as though His heart was inflexibly set upon the execution of His

declared purpose, and nothing could turn Him from it.

It is the burden of all the prophecies. Isaiah dwells more upon the golden age of the world than any other of the prophets. Section after section of his prophecies are devoted to this topic. When he rebukes the sins of the nation, he cannot forget the final triumph of the church. "And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God." "And he shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Such an expectation has doubtless been shared, more or less, by the whole world. Even pagan nations have their golden age in prospect; they anticipate the good time coming. Their hopes and expectations have had their origin in these repeated promises and prophecies found in the sacred word. The same is confirmed by the commission which Christ gave to His disciples. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Here the practical fulfilment of these prophecies begins in this glorious commission. The command is as broad as the promises. Its fulfilment is referred to the promised agency of the Holy Ghost. Most clearly it is the design

of God to reinstate man in the image of God lost by the fall, and fill his soul with inexpressible glory.

May God raise up some Joshua to lead forth the sacramental hosts of God's elect into the possession of their long neglected but promised home, where the sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw its light; for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. And they shall all be righteous, and inherit the land forever; for God has said to the daughter of Zion, "Behold thy salvation cometh, behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." We trust God is not without witness even in this day, and that the leaven of a full redemption is already extending through the church.

PART III.

THE CONDITIONS OF SECURING THIS PROVISION, OR THE STATE OF MIND NECESSARY TO THE FULFILMENT OF THESE PROMISES.

It will be seen that most of the promises on this subject have prefixed to them certain requirements or conditions, upon the performance of which, the thing promised, will be granted. We have no reason to expect the knowledge of God's will without this. We are not to suppose that God thus manifests his will to all. Of what use to manifest it to the impenitent in this way, while they are living in the open and continued violation of the known requirements of his word. They refuse obedience to its plainest precepts. What then could be the object in applying the law to all the minute circumstances of life, when every precept is disregarded and all the counsels of heaven contemned? Certainly there could be none, except to annoy and tantalize. No travel-

ler would want a guide in whom he had no confidence to go before him, and continually tell him where to place his foot. It would be not only useless, but the greatest annoyance possible. It would be infinitely worse than darkness itself, especially if the traveller was not aware of the darkness. They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Thus they are spoken of as blind, not seeing the light, and their way as darkness, not knowing at what they stumble. In such a state, how little do men know of the will of God, other than that found in the written word, and the meaning of that is not half comprehended. Even the Bible is a sealed book to them, and the book of divine providence is equally unintelligible. Thus they are liable to fall into any error.

Again, we need not suppose that he manifests his will equally minute and clear to all his children. God economizes his light and gives it where it will be improved. If he did, in many instances it would not be understood. To comprehend his will we must possess the spirit of obedience, or be in the same state as the Spirit that dictated

the word or manifests his will. Hence, we cannot suppose God would manifest his will as clearly or as minutely to a wanderer or backslider as he does to an obedient child. Like the impenitent, he is living in open violation of the known will of God. Why should he then continue to mark out each step, while disobedient he will not take the first one pointed out to him? Not unfrequently he leaves him to wander, groping in darkness at noon-day, till by-and-by he finds himself stumbling, plunging into pitfalls and entangled among briers and brambles, yes, till he even gets into the horrible pit and miry clay. When he finds himself here in this helpless and hopeless condition, and when he asks for help, his Father is not far off—he comes to his rescue. This child now feels the need of divine guidance, as he never did before; his wanderings have taught him the folly and wickedness of relying upon his own resources, and evermore he leans upon the arm of God. Reasons enough will suggest themselves to any mind interested on this subject, why God should not manifest his will equally minute and clear to all his children. Hence he has annexed

to his promises of making known his will, certain conditions which must be complied with, if we would secure the favor. We proceed to show upon what this great blessing of heaven hangs.

CHAPTER I.

SELF-RENUNCIATION OR SELF DENIAL IN THE TRUE SCRIPTURE MEANING OF THE TERM.

Self-denial is a condition of salvation, and certainly it must be so to a constant realization and manifestation of the will of God to the soul. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." It will be seen here that self-denial is not used in the restricted sense, as it is usually understood; but it means the complete renunciation of self for Christ. The interests of Christ's kingdom become paramount to every other. Whoever makes himself or his own interests chief, shall lose what he seeks; while he who denies himself, and gives up *his* interests as the chief object of pursuit, and devotes himself wholly to Christ, shall find the very thing the other loses. Self-denial here can-

not mean less than the complete renunciation of self. Nor is this a doctrine confined to this passage alone. It is acknowledged through the whole word of God. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." "If any man come to me and hate not his father," &c. "Charity seeketh not her own." This is the characteristic of the love which the law and gospel require. It requires the complete subordination of one's own interest to the highest interests of the universe. As God is infinite, his well-being and happiness must be infinitely greater than that of any number of finite beings, and hence they should be chosen in preference to all others, and no one can be accepted of God unless he does it. God must continue to frown upon every one who lives for himself whatever else may be true of him. In this state he cannot claim the fulfilment of a single promise in the Bible. The awful threatenings of God's word lie against him, and he is in danger of eternal fire. His way is darkness and he knows not at what he stumbles.

In securing the promises of God, there must be

a complete renunciation of self. All self-interest must be abandoned in the consecration of ourselves to God. And when we say this, we do not mean that we must be indifferent to ourselves or to our interests. This if we should try, would be utterly impossible, and it would be plainly contrary to the word of God. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This requires you to love yourself; to be indifferent, therefore, to your own interest would be in contravention of the law of God. Disinterested benevolence is not uninterested benevolence; it does not imply indifference to yourself, but it does mean that you subordinate your interests to the general welfare. Yours are part, indeed a very small part of the whole, and to be regarded according to its value in the great scale of universal being.

The interest of the whole may be represented by a globe, and your own by a particle in that globe. The selfish man lives mainly for that particle, disregarding the world of interest, to be secured; while the benevolent man devotes himself to secure the whole world of blessedness, and in doing so he secures his own, as his is a particle in the whole, included in it.

Hence, when we speak of self-abandonment, self-renunciation, self-crucifixion, we mean the complete devotement of ourselves to the highest good of universal being, instead of making our own interest the great object of pursuit. We become, indeed, dead unto self, but alive unto God. Self is no more the ruling motive; the love of God constrains.

Self-will is renounced in respect to all matters, We can say in truth, "Thy will be done," both in relation to ourselves and to others. There is often here a severe struggle. People often want to direct their own matters, either because they think they know best what is good for themselves. or because they fear God cannot manage them. They seem to be beyond His control, and so they must take them in hand, and perhaps do the work more summarily. Perhaps God's vengeance comes too slow, and so they must repay. In disposing of themselves for the future, they want a voice in it, and so in respect to their friends. Here is a plain want of confidence in God's ability, or in His disposition or knowledge. They cannot have light, the will of God is dark to them.

They walk always blindfolded, all the while fearing what will be next, no more controling their own course than though they were perfectly submissive; for God is at the helm after all, notwithstanding their effort to get hold. Here is the difficulty with many; they can never know the will of God while they have this self-will. They must first say in truth, "Thy will be done." When this is done, how soon the law appears written upon the tablet of the heart. They are not now all the while troubled about the providence of God. They bide them with the greatest delight. They see *God* working in all the events around them, and they rejoice. Like a child, who has full confidence in his parent, he is perfectly satisfied to have God direct the whole. It is not an effort to be willing to have God do as He will, but a great satisfaction that it is so, and he would not have it otherwise. All this trying to be submissive is no submission at all; it is really a state of rebellion where self-will would like to rule, but it lacks the power, and so it has to succumb. Great submission that! In the other case there is a quiet joy, or great delight, that God reigns.

It is not a made state, a determined effort, but a spontaneous motion of the mind; it seems a kind of natural outgoings of the heart. Payson tells us he never knew what happiness was till he lost his will. No wonder, in such a state there is a perfect fellowship and reciprocity between the divine mind and it; there is a constant manifestation of God's will to the soul, and therein it rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Come what will, the spontaneous expressions of that heart is, "It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord."

HOW EASY DONE.

There was one, who had been a member of the church for years, but her love had waxed cold, and the evidences of her acceptance with God had become greatly obscured. She had come into a discontented frame of mind, where she found great difficulty in reconciling the benevolence of God with His providence. In her distrust and blindness, many things appeared strange and unac-

countable; the way seemed to her truly one of darkness. The children, to whom she had given existence, should they become angels before the throne, or go down to blackness of darkness forever? Were they to take their chance in the world, to be saved or lost with the millions gone before them? Her mind recoiled from her position. Every admonition, every message of divine truth seemed intended for her, and yet her pathway grew darker and yet darker; faithless, distrustful, the Saviour could not show her many mighty works because of her unbelief.

Uncomfortable, restless, disaffected, she began to mistrust the difficulty was with herself, in her own heart, that she was unreconciled to God. She became clearly convinced, as conscience made her aware of her situation, that there was a state of Christian experience she had never known, where all the faculties of the soul were in delightful harmony with each other, and all in harmony with God, where one no longer *tried* to submit, and to be resigned, or *tried* to believe and love God, but where confidence and love were the spontaneous outgushings of the heart. Impressed with

these thoughts, she left the house of God one night with the solemn purpose to spend the night in prayer to God for the realization of this fulness and completeness in Christ. Scarcely had she fallen upon her knees, before the Saviour began to pour the waters of life into her soul. Her "peace began to flow as a river, and her righteousness as waves of the sea." She ceased her supplication as she began to think, "Why, this is the very thing I was going to pray the whole night for, and God has literally fulfilled His promise to me,—before they call I will answer."

Her entreaties were thus early turned to praises and thanksgivings, and her unspeakable triumph told how blessed it was to trust in Christ. All her former complaints and questionings were gone. She could now rejoice in the arrangements of God, whereby her children were to take their chance under the moral government of God—mighty as the interests were, which were at stake, and great as was the question submitted to them.

The commitment of herself with every other into the hands of a faithful Jehovah, became her great delight, and her triumph in God was not short, but abiding and constant.

Oh! "who would live *thus* remote from their God, when faith and trust in a covenant Saviour, are but the keys given to introduce the Christian to a heaven begun on earth.

All self dependence must be abandoned. Not unfrequently the severest struggle occurs at this point, and thus the life of self is greatly prolonged in this way. It seems like abandoning salvation altogether. They must struggle to have any hope. They imagine it is by some desperate effort they are to enter the kingdom of heaven. What efforts are made to get feeling; their hearts are hard and they try to soften them. But they find them more hardened still, after all their efforts. They cannot bear the idea of dying here, and so they make another effort, only to meet another defeat. Again they arouse themselves, more resolute than ever, to break into the kingdom of heaven, but alas, the onset has only rebounded upon themselves. It begins to seem as though death was inevitable. Everything upon which they have heretofore relied has failed them; they have it all contrived how they were going to be converted, what means they would use, and what they would

not. The last thing is tried, and fails; every ray of hope seems vanishing. One only thing remains to be done, and this I am sure they never thought of doing, and that is, to give up all hope in themselves. And yet how can they help doing it when everything done has only rendered their state the more desperate; every means has been tried, and failed. What now? Can he cling to himself any longer? He lets go the last twig, and falls into the outstretched arms of infinite love. Here is a complete abandonment of self. Not the least particle is retained in this act. Self dependence is wholly renounced. Here the confession of his lips, "If anything is done in my case, Lord, thou must do it all thyself." "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." This is conversion, and is not the doctrine of self abandonment, most clearly and practically taught here?

If this is so palpably true in justification, is it not as true in sanctification? If in the first act of the renewed man, is it not as true in every subsequent act, in the continuance of the spiritual life? Is not Christ just as much the Finisher of our

faith as the Author? If the convicted sinner is often exceedingly reluctant to give up this dependence, some professed Christians are not less so. They seem to forget the lesson so impressively taught them in that first act of faith. When they have once secured the hope of forgiveness, they sometimes begin to think that they can maintain the spiritual life by the performance of Christian duties. Instead of perpetuating the begun life, by continued self abandonment, (the only way in which it can be sustained) they now resort to a system of works. A good exhortation, or a fervent prayer greatly elevates them. A little self-denying work, gathering in wanderers into the Sabbath school, clothing the naked, providing for the orphan, or giving a few scanty morsels to the hungry, greatly encourages their hopes; they feel pretty sure of the heavenly prize, so long as they can be doing something. They work *ofr* life, and not *from* life, they *work to live*, but do not *live to work*. They work to get faith, or to keep it, but do not work from faith. They do not seem to know what it is to cease from all self-dependence, and have Christ work in them, and have their

works the fruit of a life-giving and energizing faith. If they did, they would not have to keep fanning the expiring embers of their own fire, they would find a fire all the while burning in their very bones, and moving them to act.

In this state they have little or no consolation, but little or no light, often perpetual darkness. They know not the will of God as they pass along in their pilgrimage, nor can they know it while they live the life of self, any more than the sinner can find *peace*, till he gives up his self-dependence. In this state they are wont to rely very much upon their resolutions and the principal events in their lives are resolutions made, and resolutions broken, in one unending series, renewed again and again, and broken again and again, all through life. When conscious of their wretchedness, they multiply their duties, increase their devotions, reiterate their confessions, and renew their vows with little or no improvement ; they grope their way along in darkness and doubt, living in a strange kind of suspense between hope and fear. Why, this is the natural life under the name of the spiritual, the life of self-dependence under the

semblance of self-abandonment. As in the first act of the second birth, there was the death of self, so in the continuance of the new life, there must be self-crucifixion; deadness to the world. All self-dependence is abandoned. You then no longer try to keep yourselves, or depend upon your works or resolutions. But you expect God to keep you, and fulfil all his gracious promises to you. "Commit *the keeping* of your souls unto God in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." You are not all the while apprehensive that God is going to leave you; you expect him to keep you perfectly. "According to your faith be it unto you." Christ comes in and dwells with you. Hear the language of self-abandonment, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live is by the faith of the Son of God." Saul of Tarsus does not live, he is dead, self is crucified, and now Christ is the life of his soul. He lives with God and enjoys the manifestations of his will. How easily the spiritual life flows on like our natural life, without an effort. Here is perfect harmony between God and the soul, having fellowship

with the Father, and with his son, Jesus Christ. So identical is the will of the one with the other, that you cannot distinguish between them. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And so is much of this sixth chapter to the Romans. Nothing less than an entire renunciation of self-dependence can be meant, and the enthronement of God in the heart, where self before had sway. This is the baptized state, where they are filled with a knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This self-crucifixion, this self-abandonment is one of the conditions then of knowing the will of God or walking with him.

We must relate a case here to illustrate this idea. Assisting a pastor in a work of grace, a few years since, at an early date I was made acquainted with the peculiar state of one of his members, and requested to see her as soon as convenient. Said he, "She is one of the most active and useful members of my church, always getting

children into the Sabbath school, but she has no hope. We have done what we could to help and encourage her, but she remains in the same dark state. Being in the deacon's family it was but a short time before I met her. She was indeed without hope, the very worst case of chronic despondency. We endeavored to awaken hope by presenting some of the promises, but she was sure to turn them around till she found a dark side. This did she again and again. At length we found a promise which we supposed she could not pervert, being so well fitted to her state. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." You perceive, an extreme case of despondency, and *hath no light!* Such was hers, and will she not lay hold upon this gracious promise? We waited for an answer. "It does not mean me, for I do not have a filial fear, nor do I obey the Lord." She found the dark side and there was no such thing as getting her away from it. We then presented the invitations of the Saviour without the least

apparent effect. She had been connected with the Holyoke Female Seminary, then under the care of Miss Mary Lyon. While here, her friends felt a strong sympathy for her, compassionating her case, and doing what they could to relieve her, without the least effect. Said she, "I am a member of the church, but I have no right to belong to it." 'How came you to join it?' Said she "I was in this same anxious and dark state of mind, without any help, and some of my Christian friends thought if I would only go forward and do my duty, and join the church, I should get light; and so I did, but it has never been any different with me; and I do not pretend to go to the communion, for I have no right to consider myself a Christian. When you invite the people of God to remain for prayer, and the anxious to retire to the lecture-room for conversation, I go with them, as the most fit place for me." Here she remained for some days, attending inquiry meetings without the least apparent benefit. At length, one night after the everlasting covenant had been presented to the congregation, in which it was shown that God had pledged himself to see

the covenant maintained; that it did not depend upon us but upon his word and power, she retired as usual to the lecture-room. As we came to her, we inquired, "How is it with you, to-night?" "A dreadful load has been rolled off from my back." 'How so?' "Why," said she, "I have been acting all this while just as though salvation depended upon me, and it does not seem as though I had taken one step. But now I learn it depends upon God, and I can trust him." Here she was completely delivered from her bondage, triumphing in God with all her heart. Nor did her triumph stop here. Her peace flowed on as a river, and her hope remained bright as the morning.

Before we leave this point, there is one other thought of some importance to all who would be crucified with Christ. It is this, Who shall perform this act of crucifixion whereby one becomes dead unto self? If we err not, a mistake is sometimes made here, by those who long for this higher life. They cherish the life of self by choosing the time and the instrument by which this shall be done. There can be no doubt but every one

sustains a fearful responsibility in this matter, and in an important sense it is a voluntary death. But some want to be their own executioners, to decide when and how they will die. Here is self in this very act, and this must be crucified. It would seem, then, that some one else will have to take this work into his own hands; and who shall it be but he who knows best how, most effectually and most easily to accomplish it? It may take some time longer than you would prefer to crucify every form of selfishness, and then it may expose you to some mortifications which you would avoid, and may cost some sacrifices which you could hardly make. You may not have counted the cost, you have thought it might require a few twinges of pain, a few agonizing desires, and then you would burst forth into a region of perpetual sunshine and joy. Remember it is *crucifixion* we are speaking of, the most painful and excruciating of all deaths. But, you say, I did not suppose we were going to be brought into this state by suffering; through self-torture, as penance is performed, by afflicting the body for the good of the soul. True; but in some sense it

must bear some analogy to the idea, or the term would not be used. It is the death of self. Death is not always so easy. By these analogies we would not have you infer that self-renunciation must be a long and painful thing. But simply that you should at once give the work up to God and have him direct the whole; that there should be no harboring self by desiring to direct. Let God have the complete disposal of yourself. Suppose it were left to you, it is not at all probable you would begin the work right; you would just as likely as not begin at the wrong end, and not touch that which would need the pruning-knife most. People are generally not aware of their most darling idols, or of their most easily besetting sins. They would find every other one first. How needful the whole work should be committed to him that judgeth righteously. Then again it is the only way in which it can be effected. So long as one chooses for himself the time and means of self-crucifixion, there can be none. Self survives the cross, and outlives death. How blessed then, to say in the heart, "Not my will, but thine be done." You now lean upon an

Almighty arm, and God works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. You have no life to support, as it all comes from God. The true doctrine of dependence is the life of the church, and she will never have any permanent life till she abandons her own righteousness and life for the righteousness and life of God.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIVING SACRIFICE, OR ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO GOD.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove (or know) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." We have quoted the whole of this, as it so fully presents the substance of what we have to say in this chapter. We have an objective view of entire consecration, here, under the form of an altar and sacrifice. Most of the terms employed are sacrificial — such as a Jew would use in describing his sacrifice. The word "present," (which literally means, *cause them to draw near*,) is the word used to denote the act of bringing or presenting the animal to be sacrificed before the al-

tar. The term "bodies" is of the same character, offered by a Jew in sacrifice, and is equivalent to ourselves or our entire being. Our bodies here include all there is of us, — body, soul and spirit. When they are laid upon the altar, the sacrifice is entire, wanting nothing. But there is an interesting point of difference between the Christian sacrifice and that of a Jew. His sacrifice is a living one; a body animated by a living spirit, with an intellect, sensibility and will enlisted for God, with feet swift to move at the call of duty, with hands ready to act when required, and with lips prepared to speak forth the praises of the Lord. Not a dead one, to burn and fill the temple with its odor; no, a living one, to send its fragrance through the earth, to perfume by its hallowed influence, the valley and the mountain.

In this consecration, there must be no reserve. Whatever word expresses the act, it is understood that the whole heart is in it. If it is faith, "if thou believest," then it must be "with all thy heart;" if it is conversion, or submission, or repentance, to be acceptable, it must be with the

whole heart. "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me *with all the heart.*" Keeping back a part, vitiates the whole. Some have supposed there might be some reserve, and still the sacrifice be accepted. Such an impression certainly never came from the word of God. To be accepted, one must come with all the sincerity, earnestness, and strength which the perceived importance of the object demands. If there is any lack of either, the consecration cannot be accepted. It requires all the power and light which you possess at the time. In the act, you recognize the principle that you are not your own, that you are bought with a price. Such a consecration extends to all that we are, and to all that we have. We give God the undivided affections of our hearts, and the exclusive service of all our powers. We yield ourselves up entirely to be guided and controlled by his will. It is at this point when we have put forth, with all the energy and sincerity of our being, the unalterable determination, relying upon the grace of God, that we will be wholly his, that he accepts the sacrifice, and owns us his. His language is, "Come out from among

them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

This consecration should be made once for all, not to be revoked. It is an everlasting sacrifice which you lay upon the altar, never to be taken off. What would a Jew have said if the one making the sacrifice, had come in and taken off a part of it from the altar? Said! he would have cried, sacrilege! sacrilege! Thus in making the living sacrifice and laying your bodies upon the altar, it should be done with the purpose and expectation never to take them off. They are henceforth wholly the Lord's, no part to be used for your own selfish ends. We wish to illustrate this idea with a case which has come under our own observation.

THE PASTOR.

He entered the ministry amid revival scenes, and continued in them with but little interruption for four or five years; laboring in some of them only a few weeks, and in others for months. In several instances, beginning with the interest, and attending the revival through all its different stages from its rise to its declension. He always felt that the

declension was unnecessary, that there was no reason why Christians should lose their interest in the work, and neglect their efforts to save the lost. It was his custom, under these circumstances, to preach from such texts as the following, "Why should the work cease?" "And the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them," &c. But by-and-by he would see the interest beginning to decline. At this stage he did everything he could to keep it up, but in time he found the church getting down the hill, and he along with it. After he became a pastor, he observed the same thing in his church, where he enjoyed several seasons of revival, bringing into the church from a dozen to more than a hundred at a time. When he saw the interest declining, he took hold with both hands, endeavoring to keep the church up, but down it would go, and he with it. After they had lived a season down by the cold streams of Babylon, they would begin to feel the need of confession and repentance. In this state they would "seek the Lord, and the Spirit would be poured out, and they would enjoy another precious work of grace." All this time he felt the inconsistency of such a state. At one time when he called upon his church to express their determination to return from their wanderings, and their purpose to seek the Lord, by rising, one remained in her seat. After the meeting was dismissed, she tarried behind to give her reason, "I have seen this done so often, and the church would be revived for a short season, and then they would go right back. It appears to me so inconsistent, I could not en-

endure the thought of passing through the same scenes again." What church has not felt this inconsistency? Still it must be admitted, an occasional revival must be preferable to perpetual declension, which seemed to be the choice of this one. As the church has been, I do not know what else would have saved it from utter extinction. The pastor, however, saw and felt keenly the great inconsistency of such a course, and again and again inquired, "must this be so? Must we always be fluctuating in this way, between revival and declension." Is there no stability or permanent state where the Christians can live, not subject to all these changes? He met with many who spoke disparagingly of revivals, and who advocated a permanent and uniform state of the church, but it appeared to him a state of perpetual declension, a constant backsliding. They gave but little evidence of life.

He examined the word of God on the subject again and again, he found precepts there requiring constant and untiring efforts in the kingdom of Christ; like the following, "Be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Again, he found Christian experience described as uniform and constant. As he read the life of Paul, he saw no change in his course, or in his experience from the day of his conversion to the day of his death. He became thoroughly convinced there was a state of perpetual rest, of untiring activity, and of constant triumph. As he read the promises, they seemed glorious, but the glory was at a distance. The difficulty was to get hold of them and make them his. This he tried again and again, without any good result. They

seemed more distant than ever. He tried to renew his dedication, to make it more thorough, but he found no change in his feelings; he read the Bible more, and went oftener to the throne of grace. He found himself often examining his feelings after making these efforts, but he could perceive no difference, except that the blessing appeared more remote. He saw he was doing just what he had found convicted sinners doing a hundred times, trying to do something, and then looking for a change. Often had he tried to undeceive them in this work, and show them its folly, but there he was doing the same. He saw it, but still he struggled on without making the least progress.

He was called to a neighboring church, about this time, to labor for a short season. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out plentifully, and many were converted. During this season, the Lord had greatly afflicted the pastor in his family, and had brought him to feel that his dearest friends belonged to God, and he had a right to do what he chose with his own. These were some of his surroundings at the close of the year.

The first day of the new year was Sabbath, and it was a communion Sabbath in his church.

The reader is aware how ministers talk and preach on such a day, and what resolutions of amendment people make. In his remarks at the communion table he repeated the text, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, &c." He spoke of the sacrifice of a Jew, that when he

had laid it upon the altar, he would never think of taking it off, it would be deemed by him as the greatest sacrilege to do so. The pastor urged his people to do the same, to lay themselves on the altar, never to be taken off, to have the Lord keep them there. But thought he, will you urge your people to do what you will not do yourself, to be like the guide-board that points the way without ever taking it? This appeared too inconsistent, and he said to himself, "No, I will not be guilty of such an act, God helping me, I lay myself on this altar, never to be taken off, the Lord shall keep me there." There was no change in his feelings, he had no emotions, but there was the simple purpose to lie on that altar, to have the Lord keep him there. Monday came without any perceptible change in his feelings, nothing was manifest but the simple trust in God to keep. It was so on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday his peace began to flow as a river, nor did it cease. It flowed right on. Whenever he had formerly felt the peace of God, he had been afraid he should lose it, and sure enough it would soon be gone. But now the Lord had taken away that fear. At night he did not fear it would be gone in the morning, nor in the morning that he would lose it before night. God kept him in perfect peace, because his mind was *stayed* on God, and because he *trusted* in Him. He seemed to have his life completely hid with Christ in God. It appeared to him as though he breathed through Christ, so intimate was his communion with God. The Christian life was no longer an effort, a trying to live, but it flowed on without effort or in-

terruption. The word of God became more precious, and many passages seemed to have a new meaning, such as often to fill and enrapture his soul. He sympathized with Paul, as he never did before, where he says, "by the grace of God I am what I am, Christ strengthening me I can do all things." Christ seemed to work this self-nothingness in him, without the least difficulty, when he had found it impossible before to accomplish it at all by dint of effort. There was no longer an effort to be resigned to the will of God. It seemed as though he could not help being so. There was a spontaneousness and ease in the service of God, and in the spiritual life totally different from his former experience. In the providence of God, he was soon called to suffer severe domestic afflictions, yet the Lord carried him through them with the greatest ease; so much so, that he was a wonder to himself, that what a little before seemed entirely insupportable, now was borne with ease and in triumph. The Lord made all things to abound to him. He could see with perfect clearness how God could enable him to bear everything, that He could with perfect ease prepare him to meet death, or all the trials He pleased to send. From that day to this, the Christian life has been a different thing with him, God causing him always to triumph. He has not been free from trials without or within, for his trials have been greater and severer than they ever were before, but amid the whole, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, he has been enabled to triumph. He has blessed God for afflictions, as much as for anything else. He soon found his way all plain before him,

marked out with the greatest precision and care. In his ministrations the blessing of the Lord has attended him in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of many of God's dear children. For nearly a score of years has he enjoyed this fulness in Christ.

Every church covenant contains this doctrine of entire consecration, and the candidate for membership is required among other things to assent thereto. What then shall be said of those who do not recognize this in their lives? Have they not perjured themselves in thus assenting to the covenant, when they did not expect to keep it? Look at the whole Christian church, they have certainly professed to lay themselves a living sacrifice upon the altar of the Lord, never to be taken off, or never to take themselves off; see them abjuring the oath, and living for themselves. Most of them in their experience know nothing about this consecration, the most honest and sincere ones among them trying to make this sacrifice, still indulging unbelief. What hypocrisy! Yes, hypocrisy if insincerity in profession means hypocrisy. Have you laid yourself upon this altar?

There is one other thought connected with this

living sacrifice which is worth noticing distinctly in Christian experience. It is made once for all, instead of the modern idea, keep giving yourself away. It is just as though a person should present you with a thousand dollars. You thank him for it. But he extends his hand and takes it. He is afraid he was not sincere in giving it to you, and so he makes a second presentation; you receive it a second time with thankfulness. Still he is afraid he is not sincere, and so he gives it the third time. Would you not inquire at length, Do you mean to give this to me or not? Is not this very much like the practice of a great many who keep making or repeating their consecration to God? The Bible way is to make it once for all from that time you are the Lord's. See the example of primitive Christians on this point. What would a husband say to a proposition from his wife to devote herself to him again, to have the covenant renewed as she had not always been as kind as the covenant required, or she was afraid she was not sincere in making it? He would say you are my wife, and I do not want a doubt expressed by a renewal. Or suppose a disobedient

child should come to his parent and say, I want to be your son, I want you to acknowledge me as your child. The parent would say, Why, you are my child. But I have disobeyed you. I am sorry for that, and hope you will not do so again, but you are my child, notwithstanding, and you always will be.

Would it not be far better for the Christian thus to consecrate himself once to God, and ever after regard himself as the Lord's, as laid upon the altar, never to be taken off; with the name of the Lord written upon him, as devoted to God, never to be changed by times or circumstances? It is an everlasting consecration of your entire being to God. All this is implied in the qualifying terms applied to the living sacrifice, "holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." None but an entire and everlasting sacrifice can be holy and acceptable unto God, and nothing short of this can meet the demands of our own reason. In this act we commit ourselves, our children, our every interest to God forever. In doing this, we are not to expect a visible sign, or such direct and immediate internal manifestations

of His Spirit, though they sometimes attend it, as to satisfy us of our acceptance with God. His promise, that He will receive, is better than all external or internal manifestations of His favor. Upon it you may rely with absolute certainty. Are you conscious that you have, or that you do thus consecrate yourself to God, though there is no change in your feelings, you may rest in His promise with the utmost confidence, that He will not cast any away, and here wait only upon God as your expectations are from him. You should be contented to commit your whole case to God, and wait with patience the issue. Be assured you shall sooner or later receive the witness of the Spirit, that you please God, and the manifestations of His will guiding you into all truth; for this is one of the consequences of making the living sacrifice, "that ye may prove, (the original word means, know, ascertain), what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God." This consecration, then, is the condition of knowing the will of God, whereby it is manifested to us by His Spirit, as we need to know it from time to time. It brings us into direct communication with

heaven, so that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost take up their abode with us. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Again, "Will manifest Myself to him." His interest is completely identified with Christ's and all his powers are in delightful harmony with His. Here he rests secure, assured that Christ will keep that which He has committed unto him against that day. He is not all the while anxious, for fear the Saviour will let him go. The path of life is so plain before him, and the way is so blessed and glorious, he cannot doubt or fear. He seems to be hedged in on both sides, so that he cannot get out of the way if he would, but he has no desire if he could. It seems to him as though he could not do differently from what he does. His way seems so clearly marked out before him, he has only to run in the way of his commandments. He has positive testimony that he pleases God. Thus, he fights the good fight, and keeps the faith.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMMITTAL OF THE SOUL'S KEEPING TO GOD.

There is such a thing as committing one's self to God, and thus becoming a Christian without committing the keeping of one's self to Him, and so the soul is again overcome and brought into bondage. This accounts for the present state of the greater part of the church. They have depended upon Christ for pardon and justification, but do not depend on Him for sanctification. In this state they are blind, not knowing the will of the Lord. Hence, there is a special command on this point, "Wherefore, let them that suffer, according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." The thing required here is not conversion or repentance, or becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is implied in committing the keeping of the soul to God. It enjoins upon those who have become

Christians, and who are suffering according to the will of God, *to commit the keeping* of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. We are just as dependent upon God in keeping us when converted, as in conversion. It is only then, as we thus commit the keeping of ourselves to God, that we can expect to know His will from moment to moment. So long as we depend upon our own vigilance and care for safe keeping, we have no promise of divine guidance and protection. His will is only manifest to them who abide in Christ, as the branch abides in the vine, and derives its nourishment therefrom.

WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS COMMITTAL TO GOD.

ITS PRESERVATION FROM ERROR.

In a world like ours, truth and falsehood are often mixed together, so that with difficulty one is distinguished from the other. Whoever understands his own ignorance or his own heart, knows the importance of divine protection, from the many wiles of the adversary. Bunyan acknowledges this, when he says, "Lord, what a fool I am, I hardly know truth from error." There is no place on earth so secluded where error may

not be found. And it is often presented in so specious a garb, that it requires more discernment than we possess, to detect the falsehood under the form of truth. It is often a wonder to many how people can be led astray by such gross errors. They forget that the error is mixed with a good deal of truth, and thus rendered palatable. If the error stood out alone, no one would receive it. We know there are some who receive with avidity, like young robbins, whatever is presented, whether it be poison or food. But generally errorists understand, the only way for them to get people to embrace their views, is to mingle the error freely with truth.

Error always injures; the extent of the injury would depend upon the nature of the falsehood embraced. One error might be trivial, while another might involve one in utter ruin. All error corrupts and ensnares. Error in practice, is only error embraced and believed. Every sin committed has its origin in some false creed. What is the life of every one, but his creed written out before the gaze of the world. If there is wrong practice, you will find false doctrine enter-

tained and cherished. It is so much so, that there never was a more dangerous proposition asserted than that, "It matters not what a man believes, if his life is only right." The whole life is shaped and moulded by one's creed. Most infidels are compelled to be such by their own godless lives. This being the case, it is a matter of the highest importance that the soul should be kept from error, and guided into all truth. How many have begun well, but soon they are turned aside by some delusion, by some false theory, or by some plausible but false argument; perhaps at first, only to look at it, till at length their faith is subverted, and they are stranded on the sands of antinomianism, or wrecked on the rocks of infidelity. These wrecks lie scattered all around you, awful monuments of those who believe a lie that they might be damned.

Under these circumstances, you can see the importance of being kept from error, and of being guarded from every false way. The soul can be kept pure only as it is preserved from error. We need not wonder at the imperfection and obliquities of professed Christians, when they hold such a

mass of crude and false ideas in solution, ideas instilled into them almost with their mother's milk, and assiduously taught them in every school they have passed through in their course of training. True we may pray with the greatest propriety, "Lord, keep us from error."

ITS PRESERVATION IN THE TRUTH IS ALSO IMPLIED IN THIS COMMITTAL.

It is not only necessary to be guarded from error, but equally important to be kept in the truth. Truth sanctifies. In this view we may see at once, that the soul can be kept pure only by understanding the truth, having the will of God manifested to us. It is the special prerogative of God's Spirit to do this. "Howbeit, when, He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."

Thus by committing the keeping of our souls to God we have the promise vouchsafed to us that the Spirit shall guide us into all truth; that we shall know the will of God, and the truth shall make us free. We need to be guarded at every point, as error meets us everywhere; in theology, and in literature, in philosophy and in science, in

the pulpit and at the bar, in politics and in religion, in business and in pleasure, in youth and in mature age. How important, then, to be armed with the whole panoply of divine truth, that we may be prepared to quench all the fiery darts of the adversary.

THE KEEPING OF THE SOUL IMPLIES ALSO ITS PRESERVATION FROM SIN.

Nothing can mar the peace of the soul as sin. "A wounded conscience who can bear?" Every one carries in his own bosom the elements of happiness or misery. Sin alone damns the soul. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Preservation from sin must then be a cardinal idea in the keeping of the soul. Here is its chief exposure, and it is precisely here that Christ is announced as "the Saviour;" "For he shall save his people *from* their sins." He comes forth as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, stronger than the strong man armed; he taketh the prey from the mighty, leading captivity captive. Resolutions strong as ever a soul formed are vain and powerless when temptations assail; watchfulness ever so vigilant fails; the fear of damnation affords no guarantee

against the power of temptation. Some here give up in despair; they conclude they must live and die the slaves of sin. There is no deliverance but in the grave, and there is no escape but in death. They have no faith that even Christ can save them from its power. What says the word? Rom. viii. 3, 4. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

As sin is our chief enemy it is a question of the greatest importance, how we may defend ourselves from it? There is but one answer to such a question, but one hope is held out, and that through the Lord Jesus. Here we have the assurance that his grace is sufficient; that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear; that we can do all things through Christ strengthening us. "In the Lord have we righteousness and strength." We cannot see, then, but that we may commit the keeping of our souls to God with the strongest assurance that we may be

saved from sin through his abounding grace; so that where sin hath abounded grace may much more abound. Through his power we may quench all the fiery darts of the adversary, and come off more than conquerers through him that loved us. "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb!" What a prospect opens to the believer!

But the keeping of the soul implies more than its preservation from sin. It is more than a defence, a negative quality. *It implies preservation in holiness.* We are to commit the keeping of our souls unto God, expecting and depending upon him to keep us in obedience; not depending to keep us, *if* we are faithful and obedient. In such a case, we do not see that his aid is needed. But we are to depend upon him to keep us obedient and faithful. All our hope and help must be in God. "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." We can have no doubt but that he will do for us all which we expect from him. "According to thy faith be it unto thee." "All things are pos-

sible to him that believeth." We have no right to limit the grace of God and say, He can go so far, He can keep us so much. Who dare limit the Holy One of Israel in this way? It becomes us rather to pray with Paul that we may be filled with all the fulness of God; that we may be sanctified wholly in body, soul and spirit, and be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calleth us, who also will do it. Nothing short of this can be implied in the keeping of the soul. Bear in mind we are to commit the keeping of our souls to him, as unto a *faithful* Creator. Can I be required to have the fullest confidence of this when I am not to expect him to do it? To doubt his ability and willingness to work the work of faith in us, is greatly to abuse the grace of God and disparage his power that works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. You may think it is only distrusting self, but in reality it is distrusting him that cannot lie. Do you believe that God can take you with all your peculiarities, with your peculiar temperament, with your peculiar trials and temptations, with your peculiar duties and respon-

sibilities, and make you what you ought to be, and bring all your powers under the control of his grace? Do you not see, that not to believe it, is distrusting your Maker? If you think your case is peculiar, we would say we have a peculiar Saviour; one adapted to everybody and every case; able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Who then will presume to limit the grace of God by his own peculiarities? To do this, is it not virtually distrusting God? We are cautioned against putting confidence in ourselves, and required to commit the very keeping of ourselves to God.

The thing then, to be done is, to rely upon God to keep us in righteousness and in holiness all the days of our life; "To perform the mercies promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." What can such language mean short of walking with God as

did Enoch, or like Zacharias and Elizabeth, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; or like king Josiah, serving God with all the heart and with all the soul, according to the law of Moses?

All this must be implied in committing the keeping of the soul to God; more than this, even *its final perseverance to salvation.*

We have not any assurance of this from any other source. Here Paul rested his case: "I know, whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to *keep* that which I have committed unto Him at that day." He does not depend upon his own resolutions, vigilance, and efforts, for final success, but upon the power and grace of God, and here he rests the matter with the strongest assurance. He speaks with the confidence of a victor, of one who has already triumphed. He has his proclamation written. "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Can there be any doubt as to the final issue, where one commits the very keeping of his soul to God? It is just as sure as the truth and faithfulness of God.

THIS FURTHER IMPLIES WATCHFULNESS, PRAYER, AND THE DUE PERFORMANCE OF ALL OUR DUTIES, RELATIVE AND SOCIAL.

Nothing more certainly than this could secure all of these results. In any other course we might fail, and prove unfaithful, but in this we have the faithfulness of God to secure the due fulfilment of every obligation. In keeping us, God does not dispense with any of these duties, but He keeps us in the performance of them, so that no interest is neglected, nor the claims of any forgotten. One under His protection will necessarily be attentive to all the occurrences of life, careful of the feelings and wants of others, and supplying them according to his ability. Such a course has not one thing in common with antinomianism. It feeds the poor, it clothes the naked, it administers to the sick, it goes about like the Master, of whom it is a prototype, doing good, reclaiming the drunkard, and delivering the oppressed. It is living *for* Christ, and *in* Him. For me to live is Christ. Every power is put under the control of divine grace, and God becomes all, and in all. What God keeps, He keeps with perfect care, what He guards no enemy disturbs. Not all the powers of

hell can harm. If the soul lies among lions, not one of them can open his mouth against His servant thus shielded. "The Keeper of Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." If trials and afflictions come, and overwhelm the soul, it lies unharmed and secure in the arms of infinite love. It looks up and cries, "Abba, Father," and all the powers of hell are harmless where such a cry is heard. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." All this is implied in committing the keeping of the soul to God, even entire reliance upon God to perfect the work of grace in us, and guide us in all our ways.

HOW SHALL THIS COMMITMENT BE MADE.

CLEARLY WITHOUT THE LEAST RESERVATION.

Here we imagine is the difficulty in most cases, where people confess to commit themselves to God. There is a great deal of self-dependence, dependence upon resolutions, upon watchfulness, upon the performance of certain duties, and so on. The consequence is, the soul is continually overcome and brought into bondage. It is not kept.

The will of God is not manifest. The moral vision is not clear. The reason is evident; the keeping of the soul is not *committed* to God without reserve. There is reliance upon something else than upon the faithfulness of God. There is a disposition to divide the work of salvation with God, to rely partly upon divine grace, and partly upon our own efforts. In such a case there can be no triumphs. The soul is left unguarded, exposed to the assaults of the adversary. As watchfulness and prayer are the results of faith in God, so they come to be relied upon, as the means to secure these results. The performance of certain duties, instead of being the fruit of a life-giving faith, comes at length to be the means of securing the faith. So they work on trying to get the faith, exerting themselves to the utmost to secure the great boon. They never get it thus. The blessing comes not till they die unto self. Where they cease wholly from themselves, and commit the very keeping of their souls to God without reserve, there they find life, a life that never dies, a blessing that cannot be told. It seemed to them if they should commit the keeping of their souls

to God, it would be giving up everything to indifference. They felt as though their whole life depended upon their efforts. To cease from them, appeared like giving up salvation altogether, and so they continued, hoping to succeed by-and-by, but really without the least prospect of help. How many thus toil and toil without ever finding rest. God only can give it, and they must renounce all other dependance before they can receive it. When the commitment is once made, love springs up in the heart, and every burden becomes light, and every yoke easy.

Everything flows on naturally and easily, duties become a delight, and sacrifices a pleasure in the kingdom of Christ. Here is a point of great interest in Christian experience, where the natural life ceases and the spiritual life begins. However dark the course of life appeared before, it is now luminous. The way is plain and easy. God's will seems to be manifest from time to time, just as the light is needed in guiding our course. How can it be otherwise, when the very keeping of the soul is committed to God, as unto a faithful Creator. The Lord guides, and the Lord keeps.

What else has one thus situated to do but to trust in God, and the whole course of providence becomes smooth and clear. The path shines more and more unto the perfect day.

What a relief to the troubled spirit, to an anxious soul, to find this resting place. Before it was all but crushed under the burden, that salvation depended upon self, but now it learns it depends upon the power and faithfulness of God. It is perfectly assured that it is safe in the hands of the eternal God, and that He will guide him securely through all his pilgrimage. We cannot see how any one can doubt, but that the will of God must be manifest to one who thus commits the keeping of the soul to Him. In this state we must do His will.

THE KEEPING OF THE SOUL MUST MOREOVER BE COMITTTED TO GOD IN WELL DOING.

The faith we have described, is very far from being an antinomian trust. The commitment brings one into a most interesting relation to God ; into that state of mind where the love of God brings all the powers of the soul into obedience to

his will. What can constrain like love? Nothing is a hardship. God begets the spirit of the law in the heart, and when the precept is presented it is just what the heart loves to do. Every form of evil is abhorred, and every good chosen. He delights in self-denial, and sacrifices for the good of others. It is all idle for one to say that he has committed the keeping of his soul to God, when his life contravenes the spirit of benevolence, when he is inert and ascetic, or selfish and churlish, shrinking from sacrifices. Can God have the control of one whose life is so contrary to the spirit of the gospel? Never. Where God keeps a soul, it moves at his bidding, and in accordance with his will; in perfect harmony with it, energized and controlled by it. It moves under the control of his spirit, manifesting his will from moment to moment, as each juncture arrives. Thus it will follow that the committing of the soul to God, should be done in the spirit of entire obedience, in prayer and watchfulness, in observance of divine ordinances, in cultivating the spirit of meekness, of self-denial, of self-crucifixion, and of active benevolence.

Any other course is plainly contrary to this commitment, and condemned by the word of God. Paul, in his benediction upon the Hebrews, clearly expresses his idea of such a life. "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ." If the life is contrary to this, all the professions in the world cannot prove this commitment. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c.

THIS COMMITMENT SHOULD BE MADE WITH IMPLICIT FAITH.

"Unto God as unto a *faithful* Creator." There must be no doubting or staggering at any of the promises of God. The least unbelief involves the soul in guilt and in darkness. It makes all difference whether one really relies upon God without a doubt, as upon a sure foundation, or whether it depends with fear and distrust. We have illustrations of the influence of faith in common life.

A child will exhibit the utmost composure in the greatest danger, while he has confidence in his parent. In great commercial embarrassments, one is unconcerned, while he is conscious he is secure. But let him begin to fear, he is soon overwhelmed with anxiety; sleep departs, and he is tossed upon the ocean of uncertainty, day and night. In a storm at sea, how calm and quiet everything appears in that vessel while they have confidence in the captain; but let the least distrust arise, all is in confusion, fear spreads from heart to heart, trembling from limb to limb, till one united groan of despair arises from every lip. These will aid us in showing the effect of confidence in all the circumstances of life. You can see if one commits the keeping of his soul to God as unto a faithful Creator, the faith being implicit and entire, the repose must be unbroken and complete. There can be no fear in respect to the final result of things; you can have no fear in respect to your own interest. You can have no more doubt of your safety than you can have in respect to your existence. So far as the faith is implicit there must be quietness and rest.

You see, then, the importance of God's making his faithfulness manifest to the children of men. God has done what he could to gain the confidence of the universe, by establishing the inviolability of his word. This he has done in his entire administration, whether by punitive infliction, or by the bestowment of his favor. God's faithfulness is alike manifest, when he cast the fallen angels down to hell, or when he raised fallen man to the seats of immortal glory. The whole history of divine providence demonstrates the faithfulness of God. He has never departed or turned aside from his established course, or from his declared word. It is well to study the character of God in the history of the past. We have evidence of his faithfulness, such as former saints could not have had. To put confidence in the word of another, we need to have confidence in his general character. If you have no doubt in respect to God's faithfulness, you cannot be troubled. Suppose we should proceed to summon witnesses, and here we are only at a loss to know where to begin, and where to end.

What says Noah, slandered and persecuted by

an infidel world? Amid the increasing wickedness and depravity of the world, his righteous soul is vexed from day to day. He is jeered at and scorned by all that pass him; years roll by; the final catastrophe of the world appears no nearer than when he began to prophesy. He is getting old; the threatening appears no nearer its accomplishment; the day of trial at length arrives, and the day of deliverance, too. What says Noah? "Faithful Creator," not a word has failed of its fulfilment; "Faithful Creator."

What says Abraham? The good man is tried and perplexed year after year, still holding to the promise, though its fulfilment appears less and less probable to the eye of sense. At length the beloved Isaac is born. Hear him exclaim, "Faithful Creator." But another trial more severe than any hitherto, now awaits him. Isaac must be offered up a burnt offering by the hands of that doting father. The altar is built, the victim is bound upon it, and the hand is stretched out to slay the sacrifice. Just at this moment a cry is heard, the offering is accepted, and the victim saved. We seem to hear him exclaiming, as he

descends from the mount, "Faithful Creator," "Faithful Creator."

What says Daniel in the lion's den? Is God able to deliver thee from the devouring lions? can he shut their mouths and tame their blood-thirsty natures? Can he keep thee alive among lions? Hear him answer, "Yes, Faithful Creator, not one of them touched me; Faithful Creator."

What say the three worthies? Can God keep fire from burning? can men walk in a glowing furnace and not be scorched? Can fire devour the executioners and shield you? Yes; ah! "Faithful Creator," fire that melts the iron and makes it molten, like the running stream, makes no impression on us; "Faithful Creator."

What says the persecuted church coming out of great tribulation, passing through flood and flames? We hear their exultant cry on the banks of deliverance, "Faithful Creator;" we have come off more than conquerers; "Faithful Creator."

What say the martyrs, the heroes of the world, on the rack, tortured in the inquisition, burnt at the stake, gibbeted, massacred, who counted not

their lives dear unto themselves as they reach that blissful shore; they give one shout of triumph; "Faithful Creator;" we have overcome by the blood of the Lamb; "Faithful Creator."

A cry comes from another lip, one that never shouted before; it is that timid soul who had lived between hope and fear; struggled and toiled, but no relief could find; it rose, and sank; again it rose and sank till at length it ceased its struggle, and the everlasting arm of Jehovah appears beneath it, buoying it above the waves; it seizes that arm with an unyielding grasp, exclaiming, "Faithful Creator;" thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Faithful Creator."

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH IN THE WORD AND PROMISES OF GOD.

When we speak of faith, here, as a condition of knowing the will of God, we use it mainly as connected with His promises. In the Christian life in general, it has a much broader application. Of course, faith must have much to do with this life of divine manifestations, as it may be appropriately called the *walk of faith*, or *the life of faith*. As it is implied in self-abandonment and in entire consecration, we might pass it over without noticing it distinctly. Its office is so important, however, that it deserves a distinct notice among the conditions of obtaining this blessing. Unbelief is often the great hindrance in fulfilling the other conditions, and in keeping the soul in darkness. In dedicating ourselves to God in all things to do his will, it is necessary we should have faith in him, that he will do as he has voluntarily assured us, and fulfil the promises which he has

graciously made, that he will accept the sacrifice which we have deliberately laid upon the altar, and make us fully and entirely his. It is just at this point where many stumble. They say, they cannot believe. One cannot believe the promises mean as much as they seem. In determining the meaning of a promise, much would depend upon the person who made it; what his resources; above all, what his disposition for liberality and benevolence. In the present instance, the character of the Being who makes them, should secure a very liberal interpretation of the promises. "He giveth not his Spirit by measure unto us." They must, then, certainly mean as much as the face of them would require. They are never to be limited unless God puts a limit to them.

Another cannot believe the promises are for *him*. They were designed for ancient saints. Those who think this, cannot have very much studied those which belong to the present dispensation of mercy. Or they belong to some peculiarly favored ones in the kingdom of heaven, whom God designs to use for some special work. Do they contain any such limit, and if not, why should you throw away this rich legacy of heaven?

A third believes in them to their fullest extent, and that they are designed for all, but he has peculiar temptations and infirmities, a peculiar temperament and disposition, so they are useless to him, as he cannot avail himself of them. Were the promises made to just such dispositions and circumstances? How many never hope to walk with God on this very account. They grope their way along through the world in darkness, as though they had no sun. They cannot enter the promised rest through unbelief.

Here they hesitate and linger, and at length become discouraged at the very border of the promised inheritance. They are all taken up with the difficulties, generally imaginary difficulties in the way. Like Israel at the borders of Canaan, the land is rich, everything they expected it to be, but the giants and walled cities were obstacles to its possession. The lions are in the way. If they only had the courage of Pilgrim, they would find them all chained. Or if they had the faith of Caleb, they would say, "if the Lord delight in us, then will He will give us the land."

How appropriate the language of Elizabeth to Mary, when one anchors down here upon the promises of God. "Blessed is she that believed." Yes, she believes, though she cannot see. There is no external sign—there are no internal manifestations of joy and triumph to the soul, there are no such feelings as are often described by those who enjoy the manifestations of God's will, and yet she believes. The simple promise of God is sufficient. The thing promised may appear improbable, yes, often impossible, so far as human knowledge can discern, still she believes. Even the simplicity of the act of consecration becomes the stumbling block to the exercise of faith. There is always a strong desire to do something for ourselves, especially where the favor is a great one; we want to make a great ado, or some great effort. What! receive the great blessing of the hidden life, of divine manifestations in the way of self-renunciation, by merely giving up all, and sinking into the simplicity and nothingness of little children? The way is so easy and simple, their faith staggers; at this point in their experience they stumble. What! have the divine law writ-

ten in your heart by simply believing? Yes, by ceasing from our works, and trusting the promise, we receive all the promise contains. "According to thy faith, be it unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." There is no limit here in the promise, but in your faith; the character of God encourages the strongest faith. We may take Him at His word, and every promise shall be to us, yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Every blessing in the new covenant becomes ours.

It was through faith that Enoch walked with God, and had the testimony that he pleased God; through faith Abraham acquired that intimacy and knowledge of God, by which he was called the friend of God; through faith, Moses became not only the friend of God, but His amanuensis to the whole world; and in the same way, Daniel, greatly beloved of the Lord, enjoyed not only the knowledge of His will in his own soul, but the same in the revelation of the history of the church, and in the final and universal triumph of Christ's kingdom in the world. We walk by faith, not by sight, and we live as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith we enter the promised rest, and

through faith we abide in it, with open face beholding us in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The following letter from the Rev. W. C. Davis, of the last century, will tell its own story, as an illustration of faith.

July 10, 1795.

DEAR SISTER: There is nothing of more importance than for us to be prepared for heaven. Nothing but the righteousness of Christ can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. This is a sentiment generally believed; but alas! how often does our attachment to the covenant of works contradict our faith, bear the sway in our hearts and sentiments, and place our own feelings and graces bestowed on us in place of Christ, and either make our comfort in religion as fickle as our frames, and leave us to despond and fear lest we have no Saviour, even when he is carrying on his own work in our hearts. It is truly astonishing to think how shamefully little dependence is placed on Christ, even by his own dear people. I have sometimes taken a view of myself from the first moment I have any reason to believe I felt religion. I spent twelve years and a half in difficulties, toils, and wretched self-righteousness, firmly believing salvation to be through grace, and yet seemed to forget that Jesus alone could save a sinner. I often made application

to him with tears, and begged his assistance over and over, his faithful word in my hand, pointing me to trust my ALL to him; but my poor self-righteous soul, wanting something *in* me to entitle me to him, kept constantly poring on my own feelings and exercises, and knew not how to trust a Saviour's promise. I went on comfortless, always seeking, and seemingly never able to find. Trusting to nothing but my own feelings, I thought he that felt so and so should be saved, but I forgot always that he that *believeth* should be saved. Thus I became a prey to every remaining lust that was in me. For my life I could not keep from sinning, and every sin destroyed my peace. All my dependence was in a holy heart—but alas! I found I was carnal, sold unto sin. (Rom. vii. 14, compare with vii. 5, 8,) This made me often cry, Oh! wretched man that I am! but still I never went so far as to thank God for Christ's sake (Rom. vii. 23, 24, compare viii. 1, 2, 9, 10, and 12.) How have I sincerely pitied many a dear child of God going on thus, always engaged in his own feelings, but never trusting to him who alone is able to save.

We cry up evidences of religion. Would to God we had more evidences than we have—*but it is base,* it is on a legal score, to trust to one or a thousand of the best evidences that God ever put into a sinner's heart, or refuse to come to Christ when we cannot see those evidences. How often do we sit down and despond when we feel corruption, or when overtaken with a fault; and the true reason is, we are unwilling to come to Christ without some *holy principle*

to recommend us. Whenever we think ourselves ugly, we think Christ will have nothing to do with us, and stay back till we pray, confess, repent, and live awhile in a better way; then we imagine we can come forward, and if we happen to fall into sin on the way, we turn right back and fall on our faces, and weep, and mourn, till we wipe away our crime; then we come to Christ, depending on nothing for our acceptance with him, but our repentance, tears, and reformation—and while we continue in a pretty lively frame, we can venture almost to call Jesus our Saviour; but as soon as we get into darkness and coldness, or into some sin, we are all despondence and doubt again. (Rom. ix. 31, 10, 3, and ref.)

This is the wretched race I run for twelve years, depending all on my own work and God's work in me, and not on himself, who had promised to do all things for me. I dragged heavily, wading through darkness, temptations, and tears, and no wonder, when I had no dependence on anything but what I had in hand, and often I thought I had nothing; and I looked not to Christ for support in *future.*

When I feel a good evidence, I have not confidence in Christ. I am trusting to that evidence, and when I have confidence no longer, then I feel that my confidence is the only pillar of my hope, and I am still recommending *myself* to him, and trusting to this recommendation, and not to Jesus. O the wickedness of my heart! what little faith is given to God's word, while all our hope is in our own exercises.

Thus far, twelve years' experience taught me, the last two of which I spent in bitter lamentations and distress, in which time I studied the nature of faith for life and death; and the more I thought on, the less I knew about it, and I am persuaded that if any man buy his knowledge of faith as dear as I did, he will thank God for it when he gets it.

After two years' anxiety, preaching every Sabbath, awful apprehensions of eternity, conscious that I knew nothing of the gospel, almost in despair, searching the Scriptures to know what I was, and what would become of me, it pleased God to bring me out of an abyss of darkness, into the blaze of an assurance. I always thought that by evidences I was to know whether I was to be saved or not, and took my Bible, read over John's first epistle, compared my heart and life, and compared again and again—and Scripture where marks are given, and all books, and my own knowledge of what Christians ought to feel. I left nothing untried but one thing, and that was the main thing. At length I read the Scriptures, "*he that believeth shall not be ashamed.*"

My poor burthened soul met the joyful tidings with pleasure and surprise. I never before, at least with any degree of confidence, saw Christ offered in the gospel. I took him at his word, gave up myself to him, and placed my hopes alone in him. I clearly saw that I had all along been trusting to my own feelings, duties, repentance, etc., but I cast them all behind my back, and counted them as *dung*, and came to a precious, faithful Saviour, with nothing but sin. I believe him to be faithful, and therefore I committed all into

his hands, and looked to his faithful word for the salvation of my soul. All this was done in five minutes. I felt easy, happy, and humble; ashamed of my former ways, and thankful to God for his most gracious deliverance. The next Sabbath I preached that sermon at M——d, on faith, which I hope you will remember as long as you live. Faith in Christ has ever since, and ever shall be my only hold. Jesus is a faithful Saviour; I love his name, I love his cross I love his word, and my whole hope is in him, and I know I shall never be ashamed, and I know this because he has said so. Now, my sister, if any ask me the reason of my hope, I answer, because I have believed on the Lord Jesus.

Moreover, I say he is able, willing, true, faithful; he has said, promised, signed, sealed, with his blood, and sworn by himself. Heb. vi. 17, 18, 19, 20.

Thus I glory in the cross of Christ. If I am asked what Christ has done for me; he has fulfilled the law, died, rose, and makes intercession for me. And as to what he has done in me, he has shown me that I am a poor, imperfect lost sinner, in myself—that I have a wicked, wretched, and deceitful, hard, unbelieving heart in me, and that I have need of his pardoning blood and sanctifying Spirit. He makes me hate myself more and more, and long for deliverance from all sin and corruption, and enable me to look to him for all I need, and I hope to enjoy. May God help my dear sister to believe.

W. C. D.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE, OR DOING HIS WILL.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Christ here recognizes a principle under the moral government of God, and it is also a promise that the spirit of obedience shall result in the true knowledge of God and of his will. If a man will do his will he shall know it; he shall not be in the dark in respect to it. This will follow from the fact that it insures the fulfilment of the other conditions of knowing his will. Self is renounced and the whole being is consecrated to God. The will of God is paramount to everything else. So far, then, it must result in a knowledge of his will, by securing obedience to the conditions of all his gracious promises. In such a state, the word of God and the teachings of his providence are understood. The mind is prepared at once to recognize

the Divine will, as it is in harmony with its own. It often happens that the will of God is not understood, because the mind is not in the same state as the Spirit that dictated the word or that manifests his will to us. That is benevolent; selfishness can never comprehend it. How little do selfish men know of the meaning of the law? Some even think they obey it when they have never once complied with its requirements. They do not know what benevolence means. The spirit of obedience understands it, for that is the spirit of the law. Benevolence knows benevolence. Why, then, should not the spirit of obedience result in the knowledge of His will?

Again, in such a state there would be a ready compliance with the will of God as soon as known, so that the doer would stand in God's order. When we speak of God's order, we mean his arrangements and plan by which one event succeeds another in perfect consistency with those arrangements and plan. God is a being of the greatest order. And yet many never see any connection or order in his works. They are wholly out of his order and in their own. When things move

in accordance with their interests, they can see great wisdom and order in them. But let the tide turn, everything is in confusion, no system in anything. The requirements of God are inconsistent with each other; so many pressed into the present moment, they cannot tell what to do first, and cannot see how any one can tell. In their eye it is one jumble of duty. It is very much so with backsliders. They act like a man who is behindhand with his work; he finds so many things to do, he does not know what to do first; he takes hold of one thing and then lets go of that to begin something else, and it will be a wonder if he does anything. Just so they know not what to do first, and it appears to them as though the Christian's life was so crowded with duties that he never could know what to do. Religious duties and obligations of business are all the while clashing. The truth is, they are in their own order, and that is confusion worse confounded.

Not so with him who has the spirit of obedience. As the will of God is manifest from time to time, there is a compliance with it; one thing comes up after another, each is done in its season.

This is God's order, a perfect system, where duties never clash. There seems to be a kind of natural order to events, as God brings things to pass in an unperceived and silent way. How smoothly and systematically everything moves along; life is passed in usefulness and duty; a commentary on the text, "Be not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The perfect compatibility of these three distinct precepts, is seen in that life.

THE BUSINESS MAN WILL ILLUSTRATE THE DOCTRINE TAUGHT IN THIS CHAPTER.

The subject of this sketch was converted when a youth, the son of godly parents, who felt a deep interest in his spiritual welfare. He soon manifested an unusual devotion to the cause of his Master, in all those ways which characterize the most active piety, in the sabbath school and in the conversion of the impenitent in the congregation. He even contemplated at one time a foreign mission, but his health not being good, he had to abandon this project and devote himself to business at home. His first object was to give himself to such a pursuit as might invigorate his health. For

a season he had all the care and responsibility of a farm.

But as his strength began to recuperate, he soon increased his care and responsibility, by engaging in a large manufacturing business, himself being one of the chief partners. During these years he seemed to have unusual confidence in God, in repect to all his business relations, recognizing Him as his employer, and the possessor of all he had. He found no difficulty in realizing the truth that he was simply God's agent, and He knew what was best for him. "One year," said he, "we probably lost fifty thousand dollars in our business, and I thanked God for it; he knew it was just what was needed. If we had gone on prospering, I do not know what would have become of us. Another year, we might have made as much as we lost the year before, and I thanked God for that. He knew it would do then to prosper." Thus in his business, he seemed to have constant triumph, and at times we were disposed to think he was daily walking with God, and triumphing in Him. There was one drawback to this impression, the absence of personal testimony, which generally

characterizes those who have this experience. He would often talk about it, but did not talk it as if it was his experience. We are aware that this personality of Christian experience often offends many. They regard it as evidence of pride, self-gratulation, and of self-complacency, and it would be so, were it not the fruit of the Spirit. Paul writes a great deal about himself, and yet no one ever thought him egotistical. He evidently feels that he is not exalting self, but God. He attributes all his triumphs to God, and it is so with all who have this experience, though they may sometimes appear to others in their testimony as egotistical and self-complacent. There can be no question but real godliness is wonderfully diffusive and communicative. The Psalmist says, "I have not hid thy righteousness in my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation." Wherever the love of God is, there is always a corresponding desire to express it. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." The lack of this was the only thing that

led us to doubt whether he was enjoying this fulness in Christ. In respect to the whole matter, we leave the brother to present his own case in his own language. This he has done quite fully in the following letter :—

My dear brother, my heart has been exercised with an intense longing after God recently. I believe I have sought the Lord with *all* my heart, — hungered and thirsted after righteousness, a state of mind and heart wholly pleasing to God. I have known, perhaps, more fully than ever before, what it was to *pant* after God as the hart panteth after the water brooks. Most agonizingly has my soul been exercised with desire to be made useful to souls, — and if I have ever sought for the kingdom of God and His will, as one searcheth for silver and hidden treasure, it has been within a few weeks past. On reaching New York a few days since, I called at the Methodist book store and found there "The Way to Holiness," by Mrs. Palmer, and purchased it without knowing anything of the work in particular. I was much interested in reading it, though I thought I could not fully apprehend what she meant by the state of holiness which she described. My mind seemed very dark about it, and last evening in the steamboat between New York and this place, I was greatly exercised. It seemed as though my soul could not contain itself for the intensity of its desires to know what this meant and to be filled with the spirit. I could not see as many of Mrs. P.'s exercises were very different from mine at many

times, yet she seemed to have something in mind that I did not reach. I was conscious that many Bible and more modern Christians had been more richly blessed in spiritual things than I, and believing that the Lord was not a respecter of persons, I felt as though I could claim all the good which it would glorify him to grant me. I felt willing to learn all these, and though I had little or no emotion, very little of the *triumphing* in Christ, of which I had heard you speak, and have read of in the experience of others, I resolved to wait on the Lord for the manifestation of his love and will. I knew of nothing which I had to give up, that was not consecrated to the Lord, — believe that I had again and again given all to Him. I have not felt from time to time that disposition to yield to temptation, those frequent upbraidings of conscience which I read or hear of in others before they enter the state which they describe as that of perfect love.

I have had that consciousness that the Saviour approved of me, which is established by the testimony that the Lord hears prayer, having evidence, as I humbly believe, in repeated and very gracious replies to my supplication. My mind has been *intensely* exercised concerning learning of the Saviour to be meek and lowly of heart, and I look to him for the instruction that I need upon this point. I have read your sermon upon the sealing of the spirit, with interest, — yet this did not seem to reach my case fully, as I had enjoyed particular privileges for instruction upon this point heretofore.

I would so love to see you. I would fly where you are

now and spend a season with you, but this is not practicable, and I will look to the Lord for counsel and help.

O ! my dear brother, what a blessed Sabbath I spent yesterday. I was so intensely exercised during service in the P. M., that I hardly heard anything of the sermon. I was in agony after something, but I hardly knew what. I panted to know more about salvation. After service I was alone, — and then light seemed to come into my darkened mind. I seemed to apprehend what is meant to abide in Christ, and felt as though I could commit myself to the Lord Jesus to keep me abiding in him, to help me to reckon myself dead indeed unto sin, but alive, &c., to secure my life as hid with him in God. I have felt that I was accepted in this renewed dedication of myself, that the Holy Ghost dwelt in my soul as never before. I can tell no one by pen and ink my exercises. But there is a sweet resting in Christ to keep me and to work in me, such as I never had before. I have known before something of this, yet far behind what now seems to be the realization of my soul. This morning I find the same trusting in the Saviour, yet little emotion. I broke down this morning, while thinking of the wondrous love exhibited in showing me to enjoy such blessings, when I have been conscious of positive wickedness, ever since I became a Christian. I look not for emotion. I am expecting to trust in the Lord, and leave the care of my soul, and of my *sensibility* to my *covenant* Saviour. I am willing to confide all that with him. I dare not ask for anything of the kind, except for such an overwhelming sense of the

value of God's present work of grace in my heart that I never shall let go. Oh! my brother, what can I say to you. You know much more about all this than I do. The Lord be praised.

Here you have a full account of this change, and why is it not just as reliable as the account of his conversion? He certainly is as competent to testify. Our churches receive candidates on the testimony they give of their conversion; they believe them. Why then not believe the same one when he tells you he has received a greater blessing than he has ever had before, a new unction of the Spirit. If he is competent to judge of his exercises in the one case, why not in the other, especially as we shall see this was not a transient change, a passing emotion, but one that has given a new feature to his whole Christian life as his subsequent letters show, and as he is still prepared to testify. Tell me why should any Christian doubt and throw discredit upon such testimony? If we should give the name of the brother, all who know him would give the fullest confidence to anything he would state on any other subject. They know him to be remarkably exact and truth-

ful in his statements. What state of mind must that Christian be in who doubts such testimony? Will you say God cannot manifest himself to another, differently from what he has to yourself?

Here is farther testimony from the same source, sometime after the former:

We truly bless the Lord with all our heart. How I wish you were here to praise him in company. But you will where you are. How can I ever tell you what the Lord has done for me. I have found something, my dear brother, of which I never knew experimentally before. Rich has been some of my previous blessings, but never before anything like what exists now—blessed be the name of the Lord. Such a *oneness* with the Saviour and with the Father. Such a positive assurance that my will is in perfect union with the Lord's. Such a consciousness that the Spirit dwells in my soul without a rival. Such confidence and sweet trust. Such a conviction that I abide in Christ, and he in me, and such assurance in claiming the promise that I shall bring forth much fruit.

I received the doctrine of a full salvation, as a doctrine of the Bible years since, indeed, as soon as I heard it fully explained, but now the Bible seems to be filled with it, and never before did the Bible seem so rich in meaning and fulness. How intense are my longings to know more about it. It requires self-denial, to be willing to wait for the use of the

appointed means. How I can talk to sinners and Christians now, what a witness I can give for the Lord. I am an amazement to some, and I appear to them as one beside myself. Yet I have experienced very little emotion. There is an increased tenderness, perhaps, yet very little of excessive action of the sensibility.

Then again he writes:

How much I have to learn. Surely I am a little child in knowledge. I pant for instruction. Blessed be God that I have such a glorious teacher as the Lord Jesus. I was reading this A. M., concerning the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and it melted me completely for I am so desirous that my heart shall be continually *filled* with love. I hope to hear that the Lord has been blessing you and your labors more than ever.

Another extract:

I regret that I shall be unable to fill this sheet without detaining my letter longer than I would wish. My time is just now so completely occupied, that it is only occasionally that I have even a few moments for such fraternal correspondence. It is but a few minutes since I was favored with a view of the privilege of serving God, such as to fill my soul with exultation. The idea that in my business I was the Lord's clerk, acting wholly for him and not for self—that in my ability to exert an influence, it was my privilege to seek first the glory of God, yea, that in *all* things. I was enabled

through grace, to seek first the glory of God, was truly a cause of rejoicing for my heart. How small the world and its pleasures seem at such times, and how glorious the privilege of being a Christian. The Saviour does unfold himself to me at times, in my walk from my house to the works, in a most blessed manner. He is a true friend.

What now becomes of that prevalent impression that business must prevent one from attaining and living in this state of triumph. The truth is, most people have not the fulness of God when they begin their work, and if they find they do not enjoy it when they are through with it, they attribute it to their engagement, as though this was the necessary effect of application to business. If so, why the injunction, "Be not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." These three things are perfectly compatible, and this brother's case is a perfect illustration of this truth. During the whole time, he has been pressed on every hand by unavoidable worldly engagements. In a letter he says, "I was pleased to learn that Providence had provided for you an opportunity for rest, and pleasant interview with your family. I have very many times thought that if I could for one week, throw off all care, and spend it with my family, it

would be a privilege that I should highly prize during the remainder of my life. It was only a few hours since, that little . . . . came to me, seeking to hire me to stay at home with him all the day. Dear little fellow, he was ready to part with nearly everything he calls his own." For years, his engagements and cares have been up to the very point of endurance, so that he has barely been able to retain his health, and yet all this while he has been triumphing in God. His close confinement, and constant employment and care, have been necessarily connected with his position as a business man. Nor has he at the same time shrunk from his responsibility in the Sabbath school, and congregation, but discharging all his duties respectively with fidelity and promptness.

Again the spirit of obedience secures the divine favor, and consequently that testimony which Enoch had that he pleased God. Christ says he "will manifest himself to him." And it was directly in view of this spirit of obedience that Christ promised to come with the Father, and take up his abode with him. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and

we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." What could be plainer that this spirit secures the manifestation of the divine will. The Son and Father are both present to lead and guide the obedient child.

It is not strange that everything appears dark and uncertain to one who has no disposition to do the will of God. Of what use to make the way plain to such; they will not walk therein. They prefer the way of transgressors; conviction of the truth would only render them more hardened and desperate. It would only annoy and stir up their opposition. For this reason they have shut out the light, and hid themselves in darkness, where they cannot see.

What endearing language the Saviour used to his disciples when he was about to leave them, in respect to the teachings of the Spirit. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will send the Comforter, who shall guide you into all truth, who shall take the things of mine and show them unto you." This very obedience secures his teachings, and the clear and unclouded state of that mind renders the truth perfectly intelligible. The conscience

and heart harmonize. Where they are in conflict there is a perturbed state of mind, which incapacitates it to judge correctly—it is irritated and chafed, restive under restraint and impatient of obligation. How different when the mind readily yields to the will of God, and runs in the way of his commandments. "His yoke is easy, and his burden is light." "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." In such a mind there is none of the effort which attends legal obedience. Everything is done easily and cheerfully, the spiritual life continues without a struggle, trials are endured with patience, sacrifices made with pleasure, and responsibilities met with readiness. Careful for nothing, it expects God to provide for all future wants, and *direct* all future events. From morning to night, and from night to morning, there is the same quiet trust in God, without fear, and the same faithfulness in discharging every obligation as it rises. Life is a perpetual triumph in God, and a continual victory over the world.

CHAPTER VI.

PASSIVE OBEDIENCE OR SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to understand the character and will of any being without entering into his condition and knowing the circumstances in which he moved. We need experience to teach. Christ was a suffering Saviour, and if we would know him, we must sympathize with him in this respect. It would be difficult to conceive how God could become incarnate, and dwell among men without suffering; and it is equally difficult to conceive how any one can possess his spirit and be actuated by the same benevolence, without also suffering with him. The character and conduct of men must grieve him as nothing else could. How important, then, in understanding the will of God, that we should enter into this state of suffering with our Lord, and be ready to pass through any trials which we may

be called to endure, in the course of Divine providence. This must be the case if we would understand thoroughly his will and his ways. For this reason Paul desired to sound the depths of his sufferings, even made conformable unto his death. Much is said in the Scriptures of the sufferings of God's people. Afflictions are spoken of as their peculiar lot, and those who have been most abundantly blessed have shared most largely in the tribulations of life. The redeemed in heaven are represented as having come out of great tribulation. This is not represented as the history of a few, but of all who have ascended to glory. We are plainly told at the outset that it is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom of God. Acts xiv. 22.

I believe such declarations of Scripture are generally considered as applicable to apostolic times, and not to the whole body of the faithful. It is supposed, as the early Christians were called upon to share largely in the afflictions of the gospel, so they were permitted to enjoy uncommon triumphs. The inference is, as we are not called upon to share the one, so we cannot enjoy the

other. It is true we cannot share the triumphs of the gospel if we do not its conflicts. Who ever heard of a triumph without a conflict, of a victory without a battle?

The error lies in the impression that suffering with Christ was the peculiar trial of the primitive church, while it is the common lot of all those who live godly in Christ Jesus. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." This declaration is not limited to any age or country, but a universal truth, applicable to all who thus live. "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." In the world ye shall have tribulation. The people of God have been an afflicted people in all ages.

THE NATURE OF THESE SUFFERINGS.

They are no doubt similar in some measure to the sufferings of Christ. We are not to suppose that the sufferings of Christ consisted mainly in physical suffering, or in bodily pain on the cross. His mental struggle and grief might have been as great in the garden as on the cross. We are told it was as great as he could bear, so much so that he was in danger of sinking before he came to the cross. He says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." In answer to prayer, there appeared unto him an angel strengthening him. Hence to endure similar sufferings, we mean the same in kind, it is not necessary to hang on the cross. We may suffer in the flesh without being literally crucified. "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise, with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in *the flesh* hath ceased from sin." Here Christians are required to have the same mind to suffer in the same sense in *the flesh*.

Paul says, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ *in my flesh*, for his body's sake." He had not suffered on the cross, yet he had suffered *in the flesh;* he had endured the reproach, persecution and opposition of the world which his Saviour had endured, he sustained a similar burden and struggle in behalf of the church. Hence he does not hesitate to say of himself, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God." He had not hung on the cross, yet he had really been crucified with Christ. He had entered into the state of suffering and trial with his Lord. At times his sufferings might have been as intense as they would have been if he had actually suffered on the cross. He says of himself, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart."

The question here arises, what are the causes of suffering to one thus devoted to God; what can produce such intense agony and distress in the minds of believers in this age? We do not know but there is as much cause for grief and suf-

fering in the present state of the church and world, as when Paul was an actor on the stage of life. An eye open to the condition of the world, and enlightened by the spirit of God, would see as much to groan over and deplore, as when the apostle to the Gentile world surveyed the nations passing on to the awful retributions of eternity. As a matter of course, how, or how much a person would be affected by a view of the state of the church and of the world, would depend upon his own state. A sinner or backslider might not see anything in the state of either to distress him, while a Christian, baptized with the Holy Ghost, would be dreadfully agonized by the view. Everything would depend upon the state of the observer's mind. In the very nature of the case, the more one is baptized into the spirit of Christ, the more he will feel as he felt in view of a dying world. Hence, one filled with the Spirit must suffer and groan as no one else can. He will see things in an entirely different light. How different the church appears to him!

One may see a good deal of external prosperity in the state of Zion. He rejoices to see multitudes

throng the sanctuary, and the ordinances of God's house respected. Another, at the same time, is dreadfully agonized at the awful insensibility and unbelief of God's professed people. He looks beyond the surface of things; he knows the love of many waxes cold, while the multitude pass on unwarned and unwept to the judgment. Notwithstanding these external forms, he knows there is but little real godliness. Enlightened by the spirit of God, he is prepared to judge in the case. Even aside from the obliquities and inconsistencies of many of God's professed people, he groans over the unbelief and backslidings of those who have covenanted with God. He knows salvation is stayed in consequence of it. His efforts for the impenitent are neutralized, and the tide of death rolls on unbroken. Who can look at such a state of things without crying out for anguish, if he has the spirit of Christ. If the eyes of Christians should be open to the state of many of our churches, what a cry would pierce the ear of heaven. Instead of church members coming to the house of God, finely dressed and clad in your ornaments, you would come clothed in sackcloth, and

your head hanging like a bulrush, mourning would be your meat, and tears would be your drink. How the officers of our churches would cry day and night for the slain of the daughter of their people. Hear the language of Jeremiah, in view of the state of the church. "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." The prophet is all but crushed to the earth, groaning out his days with anguish, passing nights of sorrow, enduring the reproach and persecution of a wicked generation.

Paul sustains a severe conflict for those who had become the children of God. "My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." It would appear he was enduring the same travail for these converts which he had felt for them, previous to their conversion. They had probably lost their first love. He could not rest, till assured that Christ was formed in them the hope of glory. What can this mean, short of their entire sanctification? For the church he suffered and travailed, that it be

filled with all the fulness of God. If Paul was now on earth, do you suppose he would endure a less conflict in behalf of the church ?

Again, the state of the impenitent world is a source of great grief to one abiding in Christ. He will feel as Christ felt for sinners, and deny himself in their behalf. Paul could say I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, in view of the impenitence of his countrymen. He felt the same burden for them which Christ felt, and he is willing to lay down his life for them, if he might thereby save them. Let one only possess the spirit of Christ, how differently he feels for the condition of sinners. "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved." "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." He does not need some overt wickedness, some awful crime to arouse him to feel for sinners; their simple impenitence moves him to this degree. He cannot sit by unmoved, while conscious that sinners are going to hell. No one knows the burden of souls, but he who has felt it. Days and nights, the burden rests upon him and weighs him down. He has no relief but as he prays, and

frequently that increases the burden. The struggle may be longer or shorter, it may last for weeks, or months, or even years, depending upon circumstances. It is often as great as the soul can bear, and if it did not find relief, it would sink under the burden. And we see not why the burden may not at times abridge life and induce a premature death. The suffering and trial is nothing compared with the blessing. You remember Jacob experienced a great temporal calamity, when he prevailed with God. It is better to die wrestling with God, than to live and know nothing about suffering with Christ, in behalf of a dying world. Yes, it is blessed to die for the same object for which our Saviour suffered and died. It helps to fill up that which is behind in the afflictions of Christ, and thus to sanctify God's people, and convert a dying world.

While the church and the world remain where they are, how can any one live in Christ without suffering? He must feel as Christ did if he has His Spirit. The presence of the Saviour opens one's eyes to a world of objects not before seen. Things appear in a new light. How different does sin and sinners appear. And were it

not for the increase of divine support, the soul would immediately sink under the view. We have given you no conception of these sufferings, unless you have experienced them. The word of God speaks of them as travail, as wrestling, as a burden, as dying with Christ, crucified with Him.

THE OBJECT OF THESE SUFFERINGS.

They must subserve an important object in Christ's kingdom, or they would be prevented. God is an economist in His government, hence, He never would permit suffering and pain without some benevolent use.

Paul rejoiced in his sufferings as filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. By this language we are not to understand that each saint becomes a kind of Saviour, and that all their sufferings in connection with Christ's, are an all-sufficient atonement for sin. We do not adapt this papal notion as scriptural. He does not mean there was anything lacking in the sufferings of Christ, which was to be supplied by His followers as an atonement for sin. The idea is, Christians suffer with Christ, not to procure pardoning

mercy, but to render His sufferings more effectual in blessing the world. In this sense, the afflictions of God's people have been of great service in extending the triumphs of the Redeemer. The attention of the world has been thereby called to the truth, and they have had in the lives of such, living illustrations of the gospel. They have taken knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. To fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, means either that he had not as yet filled up his measure of suffering for Christ, or that as he had begun to suffer with Christ, he was filling up that which he lacked in coming up to Christ's measure, that he might bear a more perfect resemblance to Him. Paul desired to sound the depths of his sufferings, being even made conformable to his death. The latter idea is more consonant with the apostle's aspirations. He desired nothing short of a perfect conformity to his blessed Lord.

A prominent object in these sufferings is the good of the church. Paul alludes to this repeatedly when referring to these afflictions. In this light he rejoices in them, suffering for Christ's

body, the church. He is willing to travail again, if Christ may be formed in them the hope of glory. For their good he is ready to endure anything. He manifests the greatest interest everywhere for the church, the spouse of Christ. His epistles are full of instructions to converts, to lead them on unto perfection. He makes use of every motive to lead them to be holy and unblameable before the Lord in love. He tells them their bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. They are the spouse of Christ, and He is the husband of the church. The very life of the apostle seemed to depend upon the state of the church. He says, "For now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord." He views everything through Christ, he loves the church for His sake, and he is willing to lay down his life for her.

The sufferings of Christians have been of great importance to the strength and purity of the church. The imprisonment of Paul turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. He speaks of some waxing confident by his bonds, who were much more bold to speak the word without fear. The sufferings of John Huss and John Knox, only

kindled the embers of civil and religious liberty which were being smothered by the Roman hierarchy. The sufferings and persecution of the Reformers, only spread abroad the knowledge of the truth, and aroused the world from the sleep of ages.

Indeed, but for the sufferings of God's people, it would seem to human appearance at least, that the world would never awake to its lost condition, and inquire for the way of life. Men have slept over the worst evils, and cherished the most fatal delusions, till God has put some of His servants into the furnace, and held them there without their being consumed, and the wicked have had to acknowledge the power of God, and salvation has spread. This has been the case at every progressive step which the church has taken in the redemption of the world. Those have generally been the most useful who have shared most largely in the afflictions of Christ in the flesh. When God has been about to bless the world in a peculiar manner, He has been wont to put some of his servants into a furnace of affliction, where they have become purified and prepared for the great work

to which God had called them. Great blessings are often preceded with great trials. Many shrink from the conflicts they would encounter in the path of duty, and they lose the triumphs of the faithful. There has not been much improvement in the world without suffering. How true this has been in the onward march of the church to her glorious and final consummation. She has been subjected to new and fiery ordeals in the work of reform. And we have no reason to think she will be exempt in her future glorious triumph. She may not be subject to persecution and martyrdom as in former days. There are other forms of suffering not less trying than the prison, the faggot, and the stake. You may be called to live under the odium of a corrupt public opinion, or to be ostracised by a corrupt church, more trying than a hundred deaths. There is such a thing as martyring one alive.

What may be the peculiar trials of the church before she enjoys the long promised millennium, it is not for me to say. But if we may take the past history of the church, as a prognostication of what is to be, we may expect the final redemp-

tion of the world will be effected under peculiar trials. The church may have to go through the furnace before she will be prepared to meet the embattled hosts of sin, and subdue her enemies through the power of an all-conquering faith, or before she will be fitted to enjoy the privileges and blessings of millennial ages. When God bestows peculiar mercies, He prepares His people to receive and enjoy them.

Again, the trials and afflictions of God's people are the means of their own sanctification. In this way they become like God; entering into his state of suffering as well as of triumph; knowing his will and fully sympathizing with him in all his feelings. The Saviour has clearly taught us the passivity of God in his life and death and if we would be like him we must enter into this state of suffering with him. Thus the apostle says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." It would seem by this that God perfects his people through suffering.

Trials are the means by which God purifies his people and gives them patience to bear the ills and afflictions of life; making them perfect in every good work to do his will, working in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.

Some have supposed that when He has accomplished this work He will cease this kind of discipline with them. They will live without sharing these sufferings and afflictions in their flesh. We know not from whence they have derived such impressions. We are sure they never received them from the word of God. No one was ever more severely tempted than Jesus Christ. And who ever suffered more? No one will pretend it was because there was any imperfection in him. Where have we a more perfect illustration of severe suffering and of deep affliction than in the case of Job, after he is described by God himself, as a perfect man? Why may we not then infer, it is not only the way in which God perfects his people, but also the way in which he keeps them perfect.

Chastisement, or trial, is no evidence of sin in a

given case. It may be evidence of the very opposite. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." Hence, trials may be only evidence of the paternal regard of our heavenly Father. They may be designed to keep us holy as well as to make us holy. We have no evidence that the trials or sufferings of Paul were designed to check any vice in him. In the case of the thorn in the flesh, of which he speaks, we are informed that it was given unto him lest he might be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelation made to him. God sent this affliction not because he was proud, but to keep him from being proud. The Lord knew he needed just that check.

Thus the sufferings of God's people serve to sanctify, and to keep them in a sanctified state. They become our richest blessings and our choicest mercies, under the superintendence of our heavenly Father. How often have the people of God had occasion to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy stat-

utes. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word."

Suffering with Christ is thus the means of our sanctification and growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ. How can we know the Saviour except as we enter into a state of suffering with him? How unphilosophical as well as unscriptural the idea, that afflictions and trials would cease if we were wholly conformed to the Divine image. In the very nature of the case, our sufferings and afflictions must increase, the greater resemblance we sustain to the character of our blessed Lord. The unbelief of professed Christians, which once we might not have noticed, now pains and grieves us to the heart. We can but mourn over their backsliding and formality. Ordinary professors little realize the trials and sufferings of one who abides in Christ. They know not his travail nor his agony. The thoughtlessness and stupidity of the impenitent world fill him with grief and pain. He looks upon their conduct with amazement, and wonders at the forbearance of God. As trials serve to sanctify the people of God, so their sanctification serves to in-

crease their trials. Suffering with Christ tends to break the power of the world; to destroy the dominion of selfishness, and deliver us from our spiritual foes. So the annihilation of self, deadness to the world, the crucifixion of the flesh, tend to increase the burden of souls, and lead us to agonize for the lost. You can see how Paul suffered as he did, and how it was that he always triumphed in Christ. The Lord Jesus overcame through suffering and death. So as we enter into his sufferings we arise to a new life.

"THE PRIVILEGED MINISTER."

For years he had been laid aside from his work by sickness of the most distressing character, poor and wholly dependent upon friends for a living; he was a fit subject for chronic despondency. To our question, How has it been with your soul? The inquiry at once awakened all the love and ardor of his being. "My soul, it exults in the Lord; I have had constant triumph in God. They pray for me as an afflicted man, but I feel that I am a *privileged* man." *Privileged!* his whole soul was in that word. We went to comfort him, but he comforted us, and we left his house praising God for his goodness.

Again, those sufferings subserve a most important object in the awaking and conversion of sinners. They have in them living illustrations of the worth of the soul. What can make the careless tremble and the hardened feel, like seeing Christians in the dust, burdened for their souls; like witnessing a self-sacrificing spirit on the part of Christians? They can see a marked difference between themselves and such Christians. The quiet and meek spirit exhibited by Christians, under sufferings and privations, has had a most powerful influence in the increase of disciples in our world. This is a kind of influence not very easily resisted. They can cavil with your arguments, they can resist your appeals, they can defy your logic. But how can they reply to your grief and agony in their behalf? Here is an argument they cannot gainsay. They have to acknowledge its power. They can but see that you have been with Jesus. Even the Scribes and Pharisees had to acknowledge this. They saw in them the spirit of the suffering Saviour.

When Christians are exercised by this spirit, sinners are born into the kingdom of Christ. An

intense interest is awakened in the community, Zion travails, and souls are born again. The most hardened tremble and submit to God. It was in this state of the church, that thousands were converted on the Day of Pentecost, and that Saul of Tarsus was brought down. When Christians groan in view of the condition of the dying multitudes around them, salvation is not long delayed. Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, and men everywhere press into it. This was the secret of Paul's success as a minister; he suffered with Christ, daily. He counted not his life dear unto him, if he might but win souls to Christ. The day of conflict and the day of triumph are not far apart.

THESE SUFFERINGS ARE DESIRABLE, AND SHOULD BE SOUGHT BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

By this, you will not understand us as urging they should court opposition, and wantonly provoke persecution in order to secure the crown of martyrdom. A spiritual mind will do no such thing. He will find trials and sufferings as much as he will be able to bear, in the faithful discharge of his duty. A truly godly life cannot fail to

awaken opposition in a world of sinners. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions." The very state of that mind will naturally produce grief and suffering in behalf of a guilty world. His eyes are opened to see the woes and follies of the lost. He need not take one step aside from the usual call of God's providence, to meet the condemnation and curses of a wicked world. If one has real faith in God, if he walks by faith, he will not go far before he will find his faith tried, and he will be called to endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross. Suffering for Christ should only be sought then in the will of the Lord, and not to gratify any worldly ambition or vain notoriety, not to be the hero of a persecution, or an illustrious martyr of some reform. No, the humble, self-denying Christian will desire no such thing, and he will do nothing to provoke any unnecessary opposition. He will endure sufferings and trials, as the Lord brings them upon him. If he trusts in the Saviour, he will find them coming upon him in a perfectly natural way. God tries those who have faith, that they may have more. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth

it that it may bring forth more fruit." As he gives grace to bear the trial, the trial only becomes the occasion of a triumph.

These sufferings are not to be viewed in the light of a misfortune, as something to be dreaded and avoided. Paul says, he rejoiced in them. "Who now rejoices in my sufferings for you, &c." Then again, "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." He does not shrink from them, or try to avoid them. But he glories in his afflictions, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. He desires to know the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death." He is not satisfied with any ordinary knowledge of his sufferings. He desires a thorough acquaintance with them, and such acquaintance as he could possess only by an actual participation with Christ in His sufferings. As his death might be considered the highest manifestation of suffering, he even desires a conformity to it. He desires to sound the very depths of his sufferings, that he may be completely transformed into His image. Who can

doubt but the apostle regarded them as desirable and to be sought, when he expresses himself thus.

He not only rejoiced in his own suffering, but he rejoiced to see others suffering for Christ. He says, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations." He loved to see the disciples of the suffering Saviour entering into His state of suffering. He knew the blessed influence of those trials upon their own sanctification, and upon the salvation of the world.

Again, they are desirable on the ground that they are the surest way to secure the consolations of the gospel. You must not think it is all suffering, and nothing but suffering in the kingdom of Christ. Were it so, however desirable salvation might be, we have little hope any of you would be willing to be a disciple; for many of you even now reluctate when you are assured there are no such joys as are found in Christ. Far from this the very afflictions of the gospel are one of the sources of the Christian's triumph. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual

in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer, or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are the partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." What could be plainer? "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation abounds in Christ, and as we are partakers of the suffering, so we shall be of the consolation. Let it not be supposed the intense sufferings we have described, are inconsistent with great joy and triumph in God. Not only so, but they are the occasion of it. Do you not understand that paradox in religion, "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," having great heaviness and continual sorrow, and yet always triumphing in God. Do you say this cannot be, one cannot be so distressed and so joyful at the same time. These apparent contrarities are perfectly compatible with each other. You do not suppose the Saviour was wretched amid His sufferings. We know some have always looked upon Christ as the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," that they can scarcely imagine how He could be happy at all;

above all, they cannot see how He could triumph and exult in the Lord. Let us take the testimony of God's word. "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." What can this mean but the Lord Jesus was the happiest being on earth! His joy exceeded His brethren. While He was the most afflicted He was the most joyful. We suppose Christ was joyful in His intensest grief. He could not have felt self-reproach or remorse in any sense. He must have felt the highest complacency in the work He had begun. Again His Father testified His complacency in His well beloved Son. We are told, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Yes, Jesus rejoiced, He rejoiced in His work, in His sufferings and death in behalf of a dying world. Even in that trying moment, when He cried in the anguish of His spirit, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He must have felt the greatest complacency in the offering He was making for a

lost world. There could have been no self-reproach nor remorse. He must have known that His Father then smiled upon His well beloved Son, while He was enduring the keenest anguish and the most wrenching agony. The Father acknowledged the highest complacency in His Son, while He hid the sun from the gaze of that awful scene transpiring on the cross, and while He gave demonstrations of His love through all the kingdoms of nature. Even in death He exults as He surveys the glorious results of His suffering to a ruined world, the power of the devil broken, and all his vast designs defeated. "He saw the travail of his soul and was satisfied."

It is thus with those who know the fellowship of his sufferings. In their afflictions they are not destitute of consolation. They are conscious that God smiles while they are in excruciating agony for the church, and while they travail for souls. That desertion of spirit manifested by Christ, when he cried, "My God," &c., has not been unknown to the people of God since. Though they have felt this dreadful desertion, they have at the same time been conscious of the smiles of God.

They have known that God regarded them with the highest complacency. Amid their grief they have rejoiced, and amid their groanings they have shouted. They have had no more doubt of the smiles of God than they have of their existence, though their distress may be such that it would seem as though body and spirit must part. One can but cry for help, and yet the very cry seems to increase his anguish. When the Lord brings one here he knows how to deliver him from temptation. As our sufferings abound, so our consolation abounds. We triumph amid conflicts, we exult under distresses. Suffering with Christ, how can we but rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? There is no describing the joy and triumph of such an one in God. It is unspeakable and full of glory. Here joys and sorrows are mingled into one cup, and it would be scarcely possible at times to say which exceed. Sometimes you would be disposed to consider one thus situated as the happiest being in the world, and I do not know how he could be happier; at others you might be disposed to consider him the most afflicted. How intense his sufferings and yet how

ext. tic his joys! On the whole, how exceedingly desirable such an experience! Who will say it is not worth seeking? "Beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." Who would not be like his Lord, suffer with him, and rejoice with him forever?

Hear what Peter says about these sufferings. But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad with exceeding joy. When one is thus afflicted, the glory is not long reserved, though its fulness may be withheld, as we should be wholly incapacitated to endure the full blaze of Divine glory. These sufferings and buffettings only render future glory more exceeding gloriously, as storms only render home more inviting and endearing, on the principle of contrast. They prepare the soul for richer manifestations of glory.

Listen to James: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has

promised to them that love him." The apostle considers such an one as highly favored of God; he is blessed with trials, he is crowned with sufferings. No cross, no crown, is as true in philosophy as it is in theology. We must suffer with Christ if we would reign with him. How can one be strong in the Lord without trials. To have strength we must have exercise; to have strong faith, we must be placed in circumstances to call it forth. If strong faith is desirable, the means of attainment are likewise, and those we have shown to be the afflictions of the gospel.

Is it strange, then, that Paul should say to his son Timothy, in his last letter, just before putting on the crown of martyrdom, "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." What better testimony could we ask in respect to the desirableness of suffering with Christ? Here is the dying testimony of an experienced Christian to a young disciple. Here is no counsel of expediency, telling him how he may avoid the offence of the cross and shun the opposition of the world. No, not a word of it; Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel

It would have been better for the world if all ministers had followed this counsel. There would have been more suffering and more consolation, more conflicts and more triumphs.

Can you doubt the desirableness of these sufferings? Consider their influence upon those who endure them? their influence upon the church at large, and their influence upon a dying world. We have an illustration of this in the lives of the early disciples. When has there been such power and glory in the church? Nothing could stand before them. Taught by the spirit of God, baptized with the Holy Ghost, they knew the will of God and they did it. They did not go forward timid and hesitating, like men not knowing what to do, but they acted like men who knew what the Lord would have them to do. Suffering with Christ, they became perfectly identified with him, entering into all his plans and knowing his mind. How desirable then, to suffer with Christ, if we may thereby know and be filled with a knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Look at Paul, one of the brightest examples of

a suffering Christian; a stream of light follows him wherever he goes. His path, like that of the just, shines more and more unto the perfect day. He goes from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. What do we need but this, in the church, to render the conquest of the earth complete, to give to the Son, the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as his possession. The life of the world hangs upon the crucifixion of the church. It may be doubted whether there will be this suffering with Christ in the millennium. But we are describing millennial experience as conformable to the present state of the world, just as this same experience was modified in the life of Paul, by his peculiar circumstances. It must vary in some degree, according to time and circumstances.

CHAPTER VII.

PERFECT CONTENTMENT.

To enjoy this manifestation one must be in a state of perfect contentment, where the will is entirely crucified, and all the desires are in perfect subordination to the will of God. The sentiment of the heart is, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Such an one cannot be disappointed; for he would have every thing as the Lord orders it. He lives and walks in the divine will, and so perfect is the union between God and the soul, that you would scarcely perceive the existence of two distinct wills. This produces a state of perfect contentment where the mind moves and turns at the least breath of the Spirit. It is not all the while chafed and troubled at the manifestation of the divine will, but readily yields to all its teachings in the varied circumstances of life. This peculiarity is strikingly true in the life of Paul. And it is pe-

culiarly interesting and instructive as illustrating Christian character in its highest state of development. The life of the apostle was emphatically a life of trial. He passed through every vicissitude from extreme want, to abounding plenty. "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Amid the whole, he had learned to be content, to be satisfied with want as well as with plenty.

WHAT IS IMPLIED IN CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

IT MUST IMPLY FAITH IN CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR.

No one can possess it without faith in the Lord Jesus. Without this, one must feel condemned and consequently restless and troubled about his condition. There is no peace to the wicked. Let his external circumstances be ever so favorable, he cannot be contented while he knows he is under the wrath of God. No kind of external ease and comfort can quiet the fears that prevail within. He has nothing upon which he can rest with any kind of security. The foundations of his hopes

may be destroyed at any moment. If they rest upon his life or upon his resolutions, they may perish in an instant. In the very nature of the case, he must be the sport of fear and hope. To be contented, one must have a sure foundation, upon which to rest. He must be where he knows he is safe, where every interest is secure. This can only be through faith in Christ. Every one who trusts in the Saviour, knows he is safe, under all contingencies; nothing can harm him. He is secure in life, and he is secure in death. Come what will, he is safe.

CONTENTMENT IMPLIES PERFECT HARMONY BETWEEN THE POWERS AND SUSCEPTIBILITIES OF THE MIND.

There is no conflict between the conscience and the heart. The intelligence approves what the heart chooses. It was not always so; the heart once craved what the conscience condemned. There was a constant warfare within. The sinner knows and acknowledges that he ought to serve God, while he chooses the ways of sin. Amid his waywardness and folly, he meets with continual opposition and goading, he finds no rest.

He is contented with nothing, neither with him-

self, nor with God, nor with any one else. His conscience approves of God as he is, but his heart rises in opposition to his claims. If God were different so his heart would approve of him, then his conscience would condemn. If his mercy or his justice were so changed that his heart should approve, then his conscience would condemn. So God cannot please sinners. The true character of God must be offensive to their hearts.

Sinners never like the church. Christians are always too hot or too cold in the eyes of the world; they are either enthusiasts or hypocrites. If they are faithful, their hearts condemn them, and if unfaithful, then their consciences condemn. If they warn them, they are infringing on their rights, and if they do not warn, they think they have no care for their souls.

Nor is it possible for the sinner to be pleased with himself, while he continues in sin. His conscience cannot but condemn. Before there can be the least contentment in that bosom, there must be an agreement between the heart and conscience. Inclination must give way to the demands of the intelligence, peace must be restored in that breast,

or contentment can never take up its abode there. In the very nature of the case there must be a perpetual conflict in that mind. The elements of discord rule and reign in that soul till the heart yields to the conviction of the conscience.

CONTENTMENT IMPLIES PERFECT CONFIDENCE IN THE SUPERINTENDING CARE OF GOD.

Like a child, who has full confidence in his parents, and who is not troubled for fear of want, he rests in God with perfect confidence, that He is able to provide for all needful times. He is not all the while filled with apprehension in respect to the future, he is careful for nothing, assured that God will not withhold from him any good thing. He is perfectly satisfied that all things are so under the control of the divine will, that nothing can occur except by God's agency or by His permission. If He permits us to be tried, He is able to give us grace to bear the temptation, so that the trial becomes the occasion of a triumph. He knows that all things are under His control, even devils can do nothing without His permission. They could not touch Job till He gave them permission, nor dare they enter the herd of swine

without license from the Son of God. Knowing all things, and seeing all things present and future, He can prepare us to meet every change as it occurs, or every temptation as it arises. Indeed, there is an economy in having but one Omniscient Being in the universe, and all the rest put confidence in Him. A blind man can walk upon that plank-road as securely and as firmly, while he has confidence in his guide, as he who has eyes. So, while we have confidence in God, we can follow Him as securely and peacefully as though we could see all the future. What have we to do but to take hold of His hand, and let Him guide us whither He may. It is just as though we had eyes to see what is coming. Things may appear very threatening and dark, and God may not seem to notice us, yet we are assured that all things shall come round right at last, so as to secure the greatest amount of good. Even the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder He will restrain. With this assurance one can rest with entire composure. What can any one ask more, and if he has full confidence in the divine government, can he be otherwise than contented? It is

a subject of the greatest joy that God is a Sovereign, and will do all His will, and that none can stay His hand. He loves to contemplate His character in this light. Everything is at the disposal of infinite wisdom, and of infinite power, and of infinite benevolence. He has a heart to choose what is best, a mind to perceive what is best, and power to do what is best. What more can any one desire? Could you ask anything more than this for yourself or for your friends? It would seem as though we could commit ourselves and every interest into His hands, not only with perfect resignation, but with the greatest exultation and delight. God lives, God reigns; and what can harm me while He is my friend, and what can I want while He supplies?

AGAIN CONTENTMENT IMPLIES THAT HE IS SATISFIED WITH ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN RESPECT TO HIMSELF.

Some are constantly contending with God through His providence, dissatisfied with everything. They might as well contend with God as to contend with His providence, as He directs all things. They act and feel just as though they thought everything was arranged to tantalize

and injure them. They cannot see why God should deal so hard with them. Everything seems to be out of joint. The truth is, their hearts are opposed to God, and hence there is continual discontent. They are miserable, and they would make every one around them miserable if they could. Some of them are in the church, and we will not say but they have been regenerated; for the grace of God can live where you and I cannot. Mr. Whitfield used to observe, "The grace of God may be grafted upon a crab-tree," the ugliest and meanest shrub in all the British dominions. Some of these discontented people may have known what grace is, but certainly they cannot have much of it in exercise.

The work of pruning and purifying them to fit them for heaven is certainly a great one, and one that will cost them a great deal of suffering and trial; they must go through the furnace till the fires have consumed the dross, and the soul is brought to lie without a struggle or murmur in the arms of infinite love, and kiss the rod that hath appointed it.

The one who possesses the grace of content-

ment, rejoices in all the arrangements of divine providence. He sees the hand of God in everything. He knows what appears to be adverse, He can overrule to the good of his cause. Those who are governed by appearances, are often very bad judges of what God is doing, constantly liable to deception; they have seen a failure, where was a triumph, loss, where there was gain. Like Jacob, they have been ready to say, "all these things are against me," when they have all worked together for their good.

He is content with everything as it occurs, nor would he have it otherwise, all things considered. He is content come what will, want or plenty, sickness or health, honor or dishonor. The language of his heart is, "It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good." It is impossible to disappoint such an one, he would have everything just as the Lord orders it. He is content to have God decide how it shall be. It is not difficult for such an one to read divine providence, for God appears in every event guiding and controling the whole to a most glorious and blessed issue. It is enough for him to know the end, the problem God

is solving in all His providential dispensations. Though he may not understand God's particular design in every event, yet he is satisfied to know the general result, the glorious consummation of the history of divine providence.

IT IMPLIES THE MOST UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE IN THE PROMISES OF GOD.

These promises embrace every possible condition and circumstance in human life. Some of them are so general as to meet every possible want, and provide for every possible necessity. There can be no such thing as misapplying them in the exercise of faith. "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

In the exercise of faith, how can one misapply such promises?

Then, again, there is a wonderful particularity and speciality in many of them to meet individual and exact cases as they occur. The number of

such is by no means small. In them, all the sons and daughters of affliction are specially remembered. In them God styles Himself the widow's God, a Father to the fatherless, and the Helper of those who have no help. They embrace every kind of time and circumstance in human life, to meet all the exigencies of the world. They should be read and remembered, so as to be at hand whenever occasion for their use arises. Such being their character, nothing else could more promote contentment than faith in them, and, indeed, it would be difficult to conceive how one could be really discontented who believed them. Could you desire anything more, or greater, than to be assured that everything shall conspire together for your present and future good? What more could you ask, or even think?

We have not space to consider these promises at length. We can only refer to some of the more prominent ones. Notice that one which covers the whole ground of divine providence, and secures every influence for our well-being in the present world. "All things do work together for good to them that love God." If one believes

this promise, can he be discontented? Could he ever repine and complain? Could he be filled with fear and forebodings? No! He could do nothing but rest in the arrangements of God with the utmost composure and delight. Only let him believe that everything is conspiring together for his good, that prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, things favorable and unfavorable, life and death, are all working together for his good, and what could discomfort him? Everybody and everything becomes your servant to help you along to heaven; they all work into each other's hands to bring a blessing to your soul. "What! is that slanderer who is making every effort to blast my good name and destroy my reputation, is he working for my good?" Most certainly, he is no exception to the general rule; he is one of your servants designed to bless you. "The wrath of man shall praise Him. Said David in respect to the cursing of Shimei, "Let him curse." God can overrule the cursing into a blessing, so that the very evil intended becomes a positive good.

What shall we say of the losses that good men sustain, of the disappointments they are called to

meet? They are no exceptions, but blessings in disguise; it is only depriving them of a less good, to bestow upon them a greater. God has to strip some men in order to save them.

Though chastisements for the present may seem grievous, yet they work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and become rich blessings to our souls. Let one but believe this promise, and he would be prepared to welcome every event of divine providence with satisfaction. He can even lie down in death with triumph.

Take another specimen of these exceeding great and precious promises: "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Have you been aware of your possessions as the children of God? If you had been, you would not the other day have counted your hundreds and thousands as the limit of your possessions, nor would you have mentioned them. All things are yours. Notice some of the items in the Christian's inheritance. Death is yours, he is no longer a tyrant or lord, but he is

your servant or vassal. You need not fear him, he is subject to do your will, he becomes a minister to help you along to your future crown. "So, then, an abundant entrance shall be *ministered* unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

In another place we are told that we possess all things. What more can any one want? If the Christian is not content with such an inheritance, nothing can give him contentment. Everything is put tributary to him. What! not satisfied to own all things! It is impossible for one who really believes to be discontented.

CONTENTMENT IMPLIES PERFECT LOVE TO GOD, AND IMPARTIAL LOVE TO MAN.

No one can be satisfied with any thing short of this. It can only meet the demands of his intelligence. Conscience cannot approve of anything less than this. The conditions of the gospel require this love, and accept of nothing short of it.

AGAIN IT IMPLIES A STATE OF GREAT EFFICIENCY AND USEFULNESS.

Some are afraid of this grace, as favoring quietism, and antinomianism. They are ready to in-

quire, "How can one be contented while so much needs to be done, and while such multitudes are on the way to hell?" May not one be perfectly satisfied with God while such is the case? Do you understand that paradox in religion, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, having great heaviness and continual sorrow, and yet always triumphing in God?"

How do you suppose they are contented and happy in heaven, while they are conscious that such multitudes are going to perdition? Why do they not cease their music while friends are being lost? Does their contentment destroy their peace and efficiency? Why need it ours? It cannot. It must render one more efficient and useful. In this state one is not all the while worrying and complaining; he does not spend his strength in needless anxiety, brooding over his own condition. He is prepared to lay himself out for God. He is not idle. Look at Paul, perfectly contented while he arouses a slumbering world, *resting* in God, while he storms the citadel of the Prince of darkness. Luther is as calm as summer's eve, while the whole Papal world trembles before his mighty grasp.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GRACE.

Not by *trying* to get it, or by any system of works. Such efforts only render one more dissatisfied and discontented than ever; the failure produces mortification and discouragement, and leaves one wretchedly disappointed, further removed from it than ever.

Not by *watchfulness* over one's spirit.

No doubt something may be done in this way, and the spirit be restrained from outbreaking discontent and open opposition. But there is no real contentment and quietness in the inner man. The elements of discord rage and storm within, scarcely restrained by dint of effort.

Not by *mere resolution* to be content. This you have tried again and again, and as often broken your resolution, and have been as discontented as ever. You have renewed the effort with no better success, and you are never likely to be successful in this way. Have you not yet learned the lesson so impressively taught by the Saviour, "Without me, ye can do nothing." Your resolutions are no more than a rope of sand, when temptations assail. If you should make the reso-

lution to be content now, it is probable you would be discontented with something before a day had passed. If you want this grace,

YOU MUST HAVE FAITH IN THE CHARACTER AND PROMISES OF GOD.

Faith is here used in that general and particular sense where it is applied to every object within its own province; such as faith for pardon, for sanctification, for the perfection of the whole man in Christ Jesus. It embraces all the promises of God and the whole range of divine providence. One thus believing, cannot be discontented. He knows that God will make all things to abound however they may appear to the eye of sense. Faith in God, — in his character, in his wisdom, goodness and power, must beget in the mind thus possessed, the most perfect contentment. It is a matter of the greatest satisfaction to that mind, that God reigns and will do all his pleasure; that his government extends to the minutest event as well as to the greatest. What triumphs simple faith in Christ gives! "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." It unarms every opposing influence, and lays one back

upon the arm of Infinite strength. You can no more disturb one thus situated than you can move the throne of God. Faith receives and appropriates all of the resources of the infinite God.

HABITUATE YOURSELF TO THINK OF WHAT YOU HAVE, AND NOT OF THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE NOT.

"But be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." This may be regarded as a prudential maxim of great importance to our happiness in the present world. Some who have all that any one ought ever to wish, are ever troubled at their wants. It is not difficult to find others possessing some things which we have not, and if we suffer our minds to dwell upon such objects, we shall be constantly dissatisfied and ever reaching after them, when perhaps they are forbidden objects to us, and as the desire usually keeps pace with the acquisition, there must be continual discontent. How many sigh with Haman, all these things availeth me nothing while there is one ununsatisfied desire left. How much of this discontented spirit through all the ranks of society! They think and sigh for what they have not. In

this way you may keep yourself in a perfect stew of discontent, and render yourself and every one around you miserable. You are always wanting and never satisfied — the stream of discontent flows on unchecked. What do men or women of the world know about contentment? As fast as one desire is gratified another is awakened, and so the restless mind cries, give, give.

On the other hand, if you accustom yourself to think of what you have, of the abounding goodness of God in furnishing yourself so richly with the good things of his providence and grace, you will find gratitude and contentment springing up in your heart. You will wonder how God could so abundantly have blessed you with everything you need. You will feel rich and full.

Then, again, you may think too, of what you have, of which others are deprived; of the sons and daughters of wretchedness and woe in our world, who have no God to comfort them, and no Saviour to fill their hearts with his love and glory; how many sons and daughters of poverty and want, you cannot think about them without being contented with your lot. Why not look down as

well as up, and see the less favored in God's providence, as well as the other side? We know of no reason why one should try to render himself discontented. Do you?

ACCUSTOM YOURSELF TO LOOK AT THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AS A HARMONIOUS WHOLE, AND NOT IN A DISJOINTED MANNER.

If you take one event out from the whole, it may appear very bad, when, if viewed in connection with others, it might appear exceedingly appropriate and encouraging. A child or a person who does not understand the object of a surgical operation, would think the benevolent surgeon cruel who would form a very different opinion if he should see the whole — the effects as well as the operation. Thus chastisement seems grievous when it works out the peaceable fruits of righteousness. But few take an extended view of divine providence. They see but one event, and only the present view of that, and they are forever troubled. They have not patience to await the issue of the trial. They are all anxiety and fear. Think what God has done and how he has been wont to deliver his people. Take an enlarged view of divine providence.

ACCUSTOM YOURSELF TO SEE GOD IN EVERYTHING TRANSPIRING AROUND YOU.

Many can never see anything but second causes — only human agency, and they are constantly dissatisfied. They can find enough in men to render them discontented. Things appear very different when we see God directing and executing his holy purposes. Thus felt Paul when he was hungry; God had a design in it. One may resolve to regard everything as under the control of God, and after all see no God there. To do this, you need to walk with God and have him abide with you continually. God will then appear in every event, guiding the whole to a most blessed issue. His will, will be manifest from day to day, and from moment to moment, as you pass along the pilgrimage of life. No other state could better secure the high privilege of knowing and doing the will of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith." By prayer of faith we mean the prayer offered in faith, such faith as secure the blessing. It has been a question among theologians whether the prayer of faith was invariably answered. To us such reasonings always appeared like trifling. It is universally admitted that no prayer is ever offered in faith without the spirit of God, and is it probable or even possible, that the spirit of God would inspire faith in one for a blessing which he did not at the same time design to give? Would not this be worse than trifling? Can you suppose it possible that the spirit of the Lord would move you to pray for a blessing, and work your mind into a state of faith, positive, and unwavering faith for it, and at the same time not

design to bestow it? As a matter of course, such prayer must be offered in the Holy Ghost. It is evident thus, to begin with, that the mind itself is under the control of the spirit of the Lord, already guiding it in its desires and supplications according to the will of God. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." What could be more explicit than this in showing the work of the Spirit in the prayer of faith, in guiding the mind and aiding our infirmities. How careful God is that we should have all needful aid in prayer, so as to render us successful at the throne of grace. An argument might be drawn from this source to prove the guidance of the Spirit in all our work. We carry the same ignorance and infirmities into our work which we have in our prayers, and hence we need His help here as much as in the other instance. And if God so

liberally and readily provides in the one case, he will most certainly in the other. Our works are as solemn and as influential as our prayers, and are designed to hold a place equally important in the part we are to act in the drama of life. We see not why this argument is not perfectly conclusive in favor of the manifestation of God's will to us in all the affairs of life. But to return to the subject of prayer. If the Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God, then he must lead us to pray for what he wills to give; if he does not, then it will follow that the spirit of God and will of God are opposed to each other, which is not supposable. We come, then, to the inevitable conclusion that God will invariably hear the prayer of faith. To have this blessing we have therefore only to prove it a proper object of desire, and a proper subject of prayer. This is very easily done, if we have been at all correct in the view we have taken of the promises. It is certainly proper to pray for what God has promised. His promises should be very much our guide in presenting the proper subjects for prayer. And has He not promised that the Spirit

shall guide us into all truth, bring all things to our remembrance, that He would take the things of Christ and show them unto us, and that by this unction we need not that any man teach us, but as the same anointing teaches us all things and is no lie? What more explicit and full promises can you ask in reference to these divine manifestations? The lives of the early disciples are a commentary upon the nature and extent of this guidance. They certainly enjoyed the very manifestations which we maintain as one of the provisions of grace.

If you want any more definite instructions on this point before you can believe it a proper subject of prayer, take the example of Paul. You will not object to the propriety of his prayers as you believe them to be especially inspired by the spirit of God. "For this cause, we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in His good work, and increasing in the knowledge of

God." Paul certainly made it a subject of prayer, guided by the spirit of the Lord, and consequently it is a proper subject of prayer to us, and the prayer of faith is the condition of securing the object. Prayer, then, places the blessing within our reach, and if such be the efficacy of the prayer of faith, how desirable that we should understand it. Who of us does not say like the disciples to the Saviour, "Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." If we can be filled with a knowledge of His will by asking for it, in answer to prayer, we must be interested in knowing what are the requisites to the prayer of faith, or how must prayer be offered to prevail with God.

The spirit of obedience is requisite to this prayer, so that we shall have an approving conscience. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." No one could have confidence to go to God in prayer, while conscious that he was indulging in known sin. A refractory child dare

not come into the presence of his father to ask a favor, he could have no confidence; his conscience condemns him. No more can one come into God's audience chamber, while his conscience condemn him for the violation of his obligations, and for the neglect of Christian ordinances. He feels guilty, he cannot look up until he has sincerely repeated and found forgiveness. "The fervent effectual prayer of a *righteous man* availeth much." And who is such a man, but one who does right, does his duty, yields obedience to all of the requirements of heaven, who has an approving conscience, and a smiling God? No one can come to God with any confidence, when harboring grudges and revenge against his neighbor; when he knows he is not honest in his dealing, or when pursuing a business condemned by the law of benevolence. "The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much," not of such an one. He can have no confidence in coming before God. No matter what he desires, he has no reason to expect anything in answer to prayer. In this state he might as well bow down to Juggernaut as address God, as far as having any reason to expect an answer.

God can only frown upon him if he essays to approach Him as a suppliant. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." God will not encourage any one in a sinful course by hearing his prayer, while he perseveres in sin. For this reason a great many dare not venture into the presence of the Lord. They never pray, their hands are defiled with sin, and their hearts are full of iniquity, and as they have no idea of forsaking their sins, they become dreadfully hardened in guilt, many becoming confirmed beyond hope. Others come only to be repulsed, ladened with guilt, filled with pride, steeped in covetousness, burning with secret revenge, swelling with ambition, putrid with lust, their heart the cage of every unclean bird, and their hands crimsoned with crime. Strange that they should dare pray, without atoning blood to wash away their sins. It is only under some awakening or in some alarm they cry for help when impending ruin seems to threaten. They cry something as the unbelieving world will cry in the last day for the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him who sits on the throne, and from

the wrath of the Lamb. Others there are, with hope, and fear alternating beside the mercy seat; they come to make request in behalf of themselves and others, and yet their *unbelief* and hesitancy afford them little reason to expect a favorable audience. How many go, and go again, without any kind assuring word, till all but discouraged, they look away to Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Blessed be God, it does not require those whose lives have been perfect, but any and all who come to Him penitent through Christ. In His name we may come boldly to the throne of His heavenly grace, and ask for mercy in time of need. With this idea before us, none are excluded except those who voluntarily cling to their sins. In the act, however, of coming, every sin must be repented of, and every idol renounced. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

It is exceedingly important for all who desire the knowledge of God's will, and make it a subject of prayer, to bear in mind that the prayer of faith requires entire purity of heart. Sin regarded in

the heart will prevent the blessing. How appropriate the prayer at this place when every known sin has been forsaken, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way, and lead me in the way everlasting." The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and hence He can prepare us to come with acceptance, can sanctify us wholly in body, soul, and spirit, and preserve us blameless unto His heavenly kingdom. In this state one is prepared to come with the assurance that his prayer shall be heard, and every blessing of the new covenant realized in his experience. There are most precious promises to prayer for such as abide in His love. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." How could a promise be more precious and more full, everything pledged on the condition of obedience and prayer. Both united secures the object, all the fulness of the gospel.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to show himself strong towards those whose hearts are perfect before

him." Another requisite of prevailing prayer, is faith. He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who dilligently seek him. Having already shown the necessity of faith as a condition of knowing the will of God, it will not be necessary to discuss the subject here. There is one idea included in faith which more appropriately deserves a notice in this place; and that is an expectation of an answer. The real prayer of faith always expects an answer, just as sure as it is made. We cannot have faith in one, without expecting the very thing promised. Elijah expected to see the clouds gathering, and the heavens lowering, when he prayed for rain. The early Christians expected the fulfilment of the promise of the Father, while they tarried at Jerusalem in that upper room. Where there is real faith, there must be an expectation of the thing asked. What, ask for wisdom, for the knowledge of his will, and not expect it! You must not only believe the thing possible, but you must expect to receive it yourself. You are not to expect it to come in a particular way, nor necessarily at just such a time.

In these respects, God often disappoints people. As we have already intimated, it is necessary to crucify self in the manner of granting the blessing. Where people have their minds made up how the blessing must come, they often think more of the mode than the thing expected, and more than they do of the giver. It is necessary for them to be disappointed, that they may not put confidence in the flesh. The answer comes through a series of trials and sufferings, and self-crucifixion, never dreamed of when the blessing was so earnestly and fervently asked. In asking for wisdom from above, we must let God impart it to us as he thinks best. If he should do it in our way, there might be no wisdom in it for us—the advantage of anything often depends very much upon the manner in which it is conveyed to us. So in respect to time, it is important, while we expect the blessing sought, without fail, we should let God take his own time. He knows best when to bring it about. The interests of many others are to be consulted. For instance, when God fulfilled the promise of the Father to his disciples, he chose Pentecostal week, when a vast num-

ber from different nations were gathered together at Jerusalem. He saw this would be the most favorable moment for granting the blessing. Just so in our own cases; we may be very bad judges in respect to time. How desirable that God should have the disposal of this matter, before whose eye everything is naked and open.

In the prayer of faith, the answer is often given and the petitioner has the strongest assurance that the prayer is answered when the blessing has not come, and days, months, and even years, may pass before the thing asked, is granted, other than in the perfect assurance that God will grant it in his own good time. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye receive the promise." The faith of God's people is often tried in this way; they only receive a greater triumph when the blessing comes. Against hope they believe in hope, and at last reap a rich reward. We suppose that in these instances, God deals with his people, according to their faith and attainments; in keeping with the promise as "thy day is, so shalt thy strength be." He will not suffer any to be tried beyond their power of

endurance, but he loves to bring them up to that to increase their faith and power.

He is educating our faith; he tries those who have faith, that they may have more. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." Thus in respect to the prayer of faith, God acts on these principles. Take the babe in Christ; the trial is a very short one, such as he can bear; but as he grows, the trial increases in length and severity. For years, he waits the fulfilment of the promise; still not discouraged, he clings to the sheet anchor of his hope, he bides his time, and he enjoys the fulfilment of his fondest hopes.

Do not misunderstand us; we would not give the impression that you must wait for years, perchance, before the promise of the Father is fulfiled to you, or before you eujoy the blessing of knowing the will of God; for we believe that this is not long withheld, nor the evidence of it, from those who come to God in faith. We should, however, leave the time of manifestation wholly in the hands of the Lord, while we rest in naked faith upon the word and promise of God. We should expect it,

though we have no external or internal manifestations of the divine favor. We honor God by believing him where there is the least evidence possible. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." The character of God warrants the most unbounded confidence in his word. How can any one help believing where God has spoken?

Another requisite, an indispensable one, to the prayer of faith, is importunity. In the instructions of Scripture, and especially in the instructions of Christ on prayer, no one thing is more dwelt upon, or made more prominent than this. Take the parable of the three loaves, that of the unjust judge and importunate widow, the case of the woman of Canaan, and of blind Bartimeus. Importunity is the prominent feature presented in these successful petitions, as though nothing could be gained without it. Whatever may be true in respect to prayer generally, it is certainly true in respect to prayer for this divine unction, the greatest blessing God can impart to his children, and therefore it is important that they should appreciate it. Several things are implied in importunity.

One is an apprehension of the importance of the blessing. No one would be importunate for a favor that he did not deem valuable; and his importunity would depend upon the real value he attached to it. In respect to the blessing we have been considering, we have shown how necessary it is to the perpetuity, prosperity and final triumph of the church. Without it the church is a by-word and a reproach; she has no strength to meet her enemies nor contend with the embattled hosts of sin. She is the sport of fear and hope, ever liable to be overcome. But with it one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. While Christians had it they went forth to the conquest of the earth, and the kingdom of Christ grew and prevailed. Every Christian needs it for his own usefulness and enjoyment, and he can effect nothing without it. In coming to God you need to weigh its importance, to see its indispensableness to yourself and the world; till you shall feel in your very soul, that you cannot live without it, and that you *must* have it, cost what it may, of sacrifice or self-denial. Many never have felt any interest upon this subject, be-

cause they have never considered its necessity and importance. They have never offered a prayer for it, because they have supposed the world might be saved without it. Such persons would not have been disposed to have remained at Jerusalem, waiting for the promise of the Father with the primitive church. They would have gone about their business, keeping up the semblance of piety but wanting its power. This is the first thing to be done in bringing the church up to the possession of this blessing. If Christians only saw the importance of this object, they would be on their knees like the early disciples, importuning the God of heaven for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the whole church, and we should have more than a Pentecostal blessing. One importunate cry would pierce the ear of Heaven, from every follower of the crucified Saviour, for the refulfilment of the promise of the Comforter, to the church militant. They would say we must have it to save the church and redeem the world.

Beloved, what can we do without this? You may multiply your means a hundred-fold, and increase your liberality for the world's conversion,

to any extent, and reinforce the ministry, such as it is, a thousand to one; but without this the church will languish and the world will die. What would the early disciples have done had they undertaken the work thus? The Christian church would not have existed one year, nor would she have made a single convert. Why then should we go on as we are going, without this baptism of the Spirit, as though our system of means was to effect the work? This system of means needs vitality, and such as the spirit of God can alone give it. Here is the cause of our inefficiency and powerlessness. If we want the zeal, the love, the courage and faith of the early disciples, we must go back and take a lesson from them. Before they went to their work they were endowed with power from on high. They never moved an inch till they had it, and then the Lord brought thousands around them to be converted. Suppose we should imitate them in this thing, since we have ascertained the secret of their power, and get our souls baptized for the work? Do we not need it? We certainly have the same facilities for obtaining it. We can offer the prayer of

faith for this divine anointing, and have we not the same promise upon which to rely for an answer? Is not the world perishing for the want of it?

Importunity implies a strong desire for the thing sought. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." This is one of the most essential things in prayer; indeed, prayer itself is nothing more than desire expressed. In importunate prayer, the desire should be strong, such as is expressed by hungering and thirsting. It is this which prompts it, and makes us hold on under all discouragements. Difficulties only increase the importunity, and make one more determined. Our efforts to obtain anything depend mainly upon the strength of our desire. Here is the difficulty with many in respect to the enjoyment of this favor. They have no such desires as lead them to persevere in their supplications. They may pray for it occasionally, and if it does not come at once, they let it pass as though it was not a thing of any importance. You never will secure it in this way. You must have a burning thirst, a pinching hunger for it, such as a starving person would feel for

bread; he can break through anything to get it. Just so, to offer the prayer of faith, you need to desire this above everything else; you need to feel willing to part with all for it, as it is so much more desirable than everything else. You will say, give me poverty, reproach, persecution, loss of friends or reputation, and of everything else, if I can only have this. Your heart is set upon it, as the most desirable thing in the world. Just as you see sometimes men supremely set upon getting rich, how they bend everything to that one purpose; their ease, their pleasures, their rest, their whole souls are given to it; or suppose that they are supremely bent upon making a name in the world, everything must give way for that; wealth is nothing, the interests of others nothing, honest principles are nothing, the worth of their souls nothing; for they are all sacrificed upon the altar of ambition. Now do you suppose you can desire this divine unction with the same devotion, and not have it? No. How long do you suppose you would pray, before the windows of heaven would open, and your heart be filled with the knowledge of God's will? No doubt that prom-

ise would be literally fulfilled, "Before they shall call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking will I hear."

One thing more is implied in importunity in prayer, and that, *a purpose never to give up the cry*, nor relinquish the hold upon the throne of God. We should indeed desire nothing out of the will of God. But anything within the compass of His will, we may seek with a purpose and will never to yield till we have obtained the favor; and this will be found true of all the cases of importunate prayer recorded in the Bible. See blind Bartimeus crying so much the more when chided for his crying. Nothing will satisfy him but the blessing desired, and he has it. The woman of Canaan is equally resolute and determined. She must have a crumb, though the children of promise starve. She has it with a blessing.

It is said we should pray with submission to the will of God, and so we should in an important sense. But Jacob would not be submissive, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," and God made most signal expression of His pleasure

in him. And he said, "What is thy name? and he said, Jacob. And He said, Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed." May we not then in praying for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, come with the same determined purpose that we will not let the Lord go till he shall fill us with His fulness, and change us into his image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord. We are sure here that we are asking a blessing in accordance with His will, and with His written word, too; for we are commanded to be filled with his Spirit. Can any one hesitate in this case, and think we are presumptuous in urging Christians to go to the throne of grace with this determined spirit, that nothing shall hinder them in obtaining this promised blessing?

We are wont to think that here is the reason why prayer so often fails to secure the blessing sought. Here is a church which feels the need of the outpouring of the Spirit, and they apply to the throne of grace for it, but they see no increase of interest; there is the same apathy on the part

of the friends of Zion and on the part of the impenitent world; there is the same worldliness and lukewarmness; they soon become discouraged and give over the work. Perhaps they multiply means, increase their meetings, have fasts, and employ other extra means, but the work still languishes, and they let go and think there is no use. You fail because you have not engaged in the work to make every sacrifice, and never to give up. Have you said and acted like Jacob, "we will not let thee go except thou bless us." You have been ready to submit too easy where the most determined perseverance and indomitable courage were demanded. Nothing can stand before them; mountains are demolished and castles scaled by them. See a Hannibal, making his way over the Alps; and a Bonaparte, meeting all manner of difficulties and overcoming them.

Now, if natural courage and strength of will can accomplish such wonders, what may not the Christian effect with all the power and resources of heaven employed and pledged for his success. He may well be undaunted amid the most determined foes; he may throw himself into the thickest

fight, for he is sure to come off more than a conqueror through Him that loved him, and gave himself for him. We ought to see a moral heroism on the part of the church such as was never witnessed in the world. Here should be a settled purpose, a determined will, which no obstacles can overcome, nor dangers daunt, nor difficulties discourage; a will energized by the power of God and guided by His wisdom. Let the church possess such a spirit, what could stand before her; she would indeed be terrible as an army with banners.

We see herein the cause of failure on the part of most who are seeking the hidden life. In examining the word of God, they find it there; moreover, they find also abundant provision for all God's dear children, cases of remarkable triumph in God, through the whole history of the church, and no partiality nor exclusiveness in the distribution of grace. The promises are addressed to them, they feel the desirableness of their being fulfilled in them, they learn that prayer is the means by which they are to realize the promised blessing. They go to the throne of grace; temp-

tations are active, unbelief suggests new difficulties, selfishness presents its claims; here they are driven back; they lack importunity; they need a will unsubdued and unsubduable on this point, "we will not let thee go." As obstacles arise, the spirit is only stirred up to a more strenuous effort, to a stronger hold upon the throne of God; heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. How near many come of entering the promised rest, and yet fail for the want of determination and perseverance. They are too easily affected with the difficulties when most of them are only imaginary. They would all disappear before a determined spirit. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." We have hardly the force of the original in the word *strive*, agonize expresses it better. It denotes the utmost determination and effort, such as no obstacles can divert or change. It is life or death, heaven or hell, and with fixed purpose the soul turns its back upon the world and all its allurements, and cries, life, eternal life, and on it presses to the gate of the celestial city. To change the

figure, if the blessing is still deferred, and the ear of heaven shut against the cry, it gathers up all its energies to one death-like struggle, it concentrates all the powers of the mind to one definite point, with the firm and fixed determination never to yield, to die in the effort if need be, rather than yield, to die crying for mercy, like John Knox, "Give me Scotland, or give me death." "As a prince, hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed?" "And shall not God avenge His own elect that cry unto Him day and night, and will He bear long with them? I tell you He will avenge them speedily." This importunity prevails, and heaven is entreated. The soul rests calmly and triumphantly in God, and the Lord becomes its everlasting light, and the days of its mourning are ended.

Is your mind dark? You are assured Christ is the light of the world. He has eyes for the blind, and strength for the weak, and consolation for the mourners in Zion. In Him every want is supplied. He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. If ever we lack wisdom, we have only to ask, and we have the

blessing desired. What a privilege to us in our ignorance and doubt! An impenetrable veil hides the future from our vision. We know not what a day may bring forth. Amid a hundred calls for our services, and a hundred ways opening before us, how consoling the thought that we may know to which we should listen, and what we should choose. How blessed to find amid the darkness a hand divine leading us along the heavenly road. It seems to be all that we need. With this assurance we can enter the dark and penetrate the gloom of life without flinching. Rather the darkness becomes light, and the gloom becomes radiant with joy. The eye of faith has pierced the cloud, effectual and importunate prayer has prevailed, and more than you desired is realized in your experience. The blessing is greater than you supposed. You find a perfect fulness in Christ, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. How can one be happier under the circumstances; his cup is full, running over. What triumph! What glory!

PART IV.

EVIDENCES OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S WILL, OR HOW WE MAY KNOW IT.

CHAPTER I.

SOME GUARDS AND CAUTIONS.

We cannot have the testimony that we know and do the will of God, while we are *conscious that we are not wholly consecrated to him.* Unless we are in this state, we can have no assurance what the will of God is from time to time; for this is the condition of knowing it. If one knows that he is selfish, consulting his own interests supremely, rather than the well being of God and the universe, he may also know that he cannot depend upon any such guidance; and if he does, he is liable to make the most egregious blunders, and fall into the most fatal errors. He has no promise to secure him in the highway of holiness. We can be assured that we shall know what is that good,

acceptable, and perfect will of God, only as we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. If we are then conscious that we have not thus given ourselves to God, or if we have not, we cannot know what is his will concerning us at a given time. The heart and life must be right to know this; for with no others can God have fellowship. Hence obliquities and inconsistencies in the life, unfaithfulness in discharging duty, disregarding the interests of others, and neglect of divine ordinances preclude this knowledge.

Again, we cannot have this evidence while our *conduct is plainly contrary to the word of God.* It matters not what may be our pretensions or impressions in respect to our course, if it is clearly forbidden in the word of God. The spirit of God dictated the word, and it never would contradict itself. It does not speak a language different from what it did eighteen hundred years ago. Though it may not mark out every particular step of life, yet if any suppose that they are guided by the Spirit, while their course plainly contravenes the letter and spirit of the word, they are certainly

deceived. Here are way marks to detect the wandering, though they may not be sufficient of themselves to decide what should be done in all the minute circumstances of life. The spirit of God would never lead one to neglect any of the external duties of life, such as prayer, observance of the Sabbath, and attendance upon the ordinances, and so on. These are clearly enjoined by the Spirit of God, and no internal witness of the same, will ever set aside these duties. They are designed to be obligatory upon the church in all coming time, not as a yoke of bondage like the Jewish ritual, but as badges of freedom to the redeemed in the kingdom of Christ. Real godliness has forms, and will have them in the final redemption of the world. Christian freedom is not lawlessness nor licentiousness. The soul freely and rejoicingly does what the law requires. There is no bondage in it. God writes the precept on the heart, and engraves it upon the mind, so that we delight to do what the law requires. The will is perfectly free, and it uses its freedom in doing all that the word of God enjoins. If there is any constraint in it, it is the love of God constraining

them in their chosen way, making every yoke easy and every burden light. The spirit of God never sets aside his word, but uses it, interprets its meaning, applies it to the duties of life, opens its promises to our understanding, and makes its pages bright with heavenly fire.

Nor can we have the testimony that we know the will of God while our *course is contrary to the dictates of an enlightened understanding.* God never means to set aside our reason to be guided by a blind impression. The spirit of God appeals to our reason or intelligence and its decisions are known through it. We may not be able to separate the two while all the powers of the mind are in blessed harmony with the will of God, the spirit witnessing with our spirit. We can hardly distinguish the testimony of one from the other.

Suppose in a given case that we are convinced a particular course is wrong; our reason with all the light we have, condemns it; to pursue such a course under an impression that it is in accordance with the will of God, would do violence to every principle of our being, and, we may say, contrary to the divine word. The spirit of God

never sets aside our reason but uses it, enlightens it, works through it, bringing it into delightful harmony with His will. How often God appeals to the reason of man in his word, "Come now and let us reason together," and can we suppose that the spirit of the Lord would ever set aside this agency. Hence if one claims to be guided by the spirit of the Lord while his course is plainly contrary to sound or sanctified reason, he only deceives himself.

This testimony is not a *mere impression that you are accepted, nor is it a mere emotion or feeling that you are a favorite of heaven* and peculiarly blessed of God. All this you may have without knowing the will of God. It is a matter of great importance what is the foundation or origin of this emotion. Does it arise from real satisfaction in God or simply from an impression of the divine favor? Emotion varies as the wind, and may be of no more importance than the passing breeze. And yet it is often greatly depended upon in religion as though it was the great desideratum in Christian experience.

It is, however, the most transient and the least

substantial thing in it. Feeling may be awakened from various causes, from false as well as from real impressions, from mistaken as well as from correct views of one's state and character. Hence it will never do to depend upon mere emotion. While we say this let us not be understood as intimating that true godliness has no emotions. The consolations of God are neither few nor small, their joy is unspeakable and full of glory. There is a joy with which a stranger intermeddles not, and an evidence that cannot be counterfeited, an assurance that defies all fear. Still there are counterfeits of Christian joy, imitations of Christian hopes which baffle all except the elect.

CHAPTER II.

THE WITNESSES.

We proceed now to notice the evidence, or how we may be assured that we know the will of God. There is no more difficulty about it than there is in knowing that one is a Christian; for the evidence is of the same character and communicated in the same way. How would you give one to understand that you were a child of God, especially one who knows nothing about salvation himself? What evidence could you convey to his mind that you were a regenerated person. You would have to state evidence that could not be tangible or visible to him. He cannot see or know the testimony of your own consciousness only as you declare it. He cannot see, and it is difficult for him to understand the testimony of the Spirit. It is all dark and obscure to his mind. He cannot know how you get at this evidence or knowledge. Let the believer in the

doctrine of full assurance now try to give the sinner the evidence by which he knows he has passed from death unto life. We think he will confess that language is a poor medium by which to convey the evidence as it exists in his own mind, by which he knows he is a Christian. After he has said all he can, he points within as though there was something there which he could not tell, a joy inexpressible, an assurance which no sound can convey to any other mind. But as poor a medium as language is, it is the best we have whereby to convey this testimony to others and that upon which they have to rely.

Two prominent witnesses are referred to in the word of God, as proving this point. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Here are two distinct witnesses to the truth, the spirit of God and our own spirit. As the spirit of God speaks through our intelligence or consciousness, it is difficult to separate the testimony of these two witnesses, giving what one testifies to and what the other; since they give the same testimony, and through the same channel, it may be termed concurrent testi-

mony. We think that the Christian is able to distinguish between the testimony given by these two witnesses at times, but perhaps not ordinarily. At least, every Christian has them more or less distinct in his experience. He finds an indescribable union and harmony between God and his soul, by which he cries, Abba, Father. This agreement or oneness convinces him that reconciliation has taken place. He can say, he knows it. He has no more doubt of it than he has of his own existence. The spiritual life is attended with evidence of its existence, as satisfactory as that of the natural life. How do you know that you exist, or what is the evidence by which you know this? We think you would find it difficult to prove your own existence, if you should set aside the evidence of your own consciousness. If you doubt this, make the attempt to prove your existence without this evidence. We have the same testimony as to the beginning and existence of the spiritual life, and in addition the spirit of God speaking through our intelligence to the same effect, by which the testimony becomes doubly strong. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly

to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, (original assurance), who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Thus we learn that it was the design of God to make our adoption as clear and as strong as possible. This He has done by the witness of the Spirit in concurrence with the testimony of our own spirit. We are more particular on this point, as we hope thereby to convey to the Christian an idea of the evidence, or of the nature of the evidence by which he may know the will of God. Every Christian, we suppose, has some knowledge of this assurance, as he must have the witness of the Spirit in some degree, to have any evidence that he has passed from death unto life, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. We admit, that in some instances it is very slight, the soul hangs quivering between life and death, and you can hardly tell which side of the scale turns. But it may be presumed that every Christian has some knowledge of this testimony. The evidence by

which we know the will of God is of a similar character, and communicated in the same way; and to one who has not experienced this testimony, there will be alike difficulty in understanding this evidence, as there is in the unregenerate understanding the evidence of conversion.

In the first place he has the testimony of God's Spirit, that he knows and does the will of God. In the act of conversion he had it, and what is the Christian life but the continuance of the converted state. If he had this testimony, then why not the same repeated all through his subsequent course? This testimony Enoch had. He knew what would please God, and he did it. God gave him the testimony. He is spoken of as walking with God, and having fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. This denotes a constant reciprocity of will, and of feeling between God and the believer. By His Spirit, invisible to us, He makes known His will, and teaches us what to do under present circumstances. What a blessed thought, an omnipresent God! Ever present, He can manifest His will to those continually who walk with Him. Like two intimate

friends, walking along together, they disclose their minds to each other; thus, God discloses His to those who abide in Him. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." In this sense Christ becomes Immanuel, God with us. The heart becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, wherein He takes up His abode and manifests His will. Isa. lvii. 15: "For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." In this way, by His Spirit, he leads us into all truth, works in us to *will* and to do.

The question arises here, Does the spirit of God ever witness in any other way to the mind, than by yielding its appropriate fruits? "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Are not these the witness of the Spirit referred to in the portion of Scripture we are considering? These are the legitimate fruits of the state of mind produced by the spirit of the Lord,

and are evidence of the influence of the Spirit upon the heart. If, then, this is the witness of the Spirit spoken of, it will follow that we have no other evidence of our adoption and justification than our lives afford. Our conduct and conversation are certainly evidences to the world what spirit controls us. "By their fruits ye shall know them." But is this the evidence or testimony which satisfies the Christian himself in respect to his adoption? Would most Christians be apt to point to their lives, or to the internal state of the mind, as the testimony that satisfies them? Many would say there was something that made them know they had passed from death unto life. They cannot tell how the testimony comes, it is as though the whisper of a friend spake to them assuring them of reconciliation. Notice the peculiar language used. "The Spirit itself beareth witness," and not the fruits of the Spirit. Here is positive, distinct testimony by a living agent to a fact, and it is so clearly testified to, that there is not a doubt in respect to its reality. So much so, that you will find the strongest assurance in unsophisticated and common minds, that can give no

account how this assurance comes; they only have it. They say, they *know*, and it is not in the power of infidelity or skepticism to shake them in the least. We have heard skeptics say they would give anything if they only had the assurance of such simple minds. They do not point you to their lives, but to a felt assurance, a realized assurance in their own minds of their acceptance with God. Infidelity may confound, but never can convince them. They are unmoved, just as strong as ever; for they *know* the truth in their own experience. Now God says the Spirit beareth witness, and this accounts for the strength of this assurance. What God testifies to, we should expect would be strong; He would make it certain. There is no voice nor sight, but an inner felt assurance that they are the Lord's, and not all the world can raise a doubt of it. A little while before the mind was dark, there was no realizing sense of divine things, even faith and repentance were unintelligible ideas, they stumbled everywhere in the word of God, but now everything is clear, realized to their minds, and they know what God has said is true. It is all

fulfilled to them. We hesitate not to say, that there is no way in which this assurance can be accounted for, except in the above manner.

At times how vivid, how clear and how strong the testimony is. It could not be more so if it were blazoned on the very heavens, or if it were proclaimed by a voice from God. What exultation and triumph it awakens! Instead of joy and peace being the witness of the Spirit, they are the legitimate results of the testimony of the Holy Ghost in their souls. It is this which fills their hearts with glory, and their mouths with praise. Hark! hear the shouts of triumph; listen to the songs of jubilee!

The second witness is our own spirit corroborating the testimony of the Spirit. Our consciousness testifies to our acceptance with God as it does to our consecration to him. Mind takes cognizance of its own acts, and thus furnishes testimony that one is given to the Lord. It is not always observing its own operations, and hence many cannot tell the hour, or day, or week when they consecrated themselves to God. Yet you may be conscious at a given time that you do

commit yourself to the Saviour, and though you have no other evidence than this, you may be satisfied that you are the Lord's. Can you not believe, yourself, and trust to the testimony of your own consciousness in a given act? We have seen instances where this testimony was quite strong at once, and the person felt assured of the act of dedication. Most Christians have seen times in their history when they have had no other evidence of their adoption than this consciousness. All has been dark without and no light within; they have looked here and there for help, but the heavens were brass over their heads, the earth iron beneath their feet; the Bible was a sealed book. In their extremity they are conscious that they lean back upon the arm of the Almighty. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." They are conscious that they trust, though they have none of the usual evidences often accompanying salvation. They are conscious that they hang upon the promises, and

they can say from the heart, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him."

This evidence is repeatedly referred to in the word of God. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my *conscience* bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." Here the testimony of his conscience is spoken of as a distinct witness to the truth uttered. In the same manner it may be a witness to any other truth. Though it is spoken of here as enlightened by the spirit of God, yet that circumstance does not disqualify it from being a distinct witness, but renders its testimony more reliable. It is also recognized in all those texts where the personal pronoun is used. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "We know that we have passed from death unto life." "I know in whom I have believed," &c. Their own testimony, here, is united with the witness of the Spirit, and together they produce the strongest assurance. As both witnesses speak through the same organs, we may not be able to separate their testimony, and generally they are spoken of as one, though their distinctness is recognized in some places. Our consciousness takes cognizance of our own acts,

of our consecration or spirit of obedience, and in this state, the knowledge of the divine will, is promised by Him who cannot lie. So far then, as our consciousness may be relied on, we know the will of God. But when the testimony of our own spirit is confirmed by that of God's spirit, can there be longer any doubt that we may know it? If we have their concurrent and combined testimony on the point, we can no more doubt it than we can doubt our own existence. We are just as sure what the will of God is, as we are that we are Christians. We may say in truth, we know, for the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit. We have the testimony which Enoch had, that we please the Lord, and it is communicated to us in the same way, by the Spirit. It is no labored and constant effort to know the will of God. It might be thought it would require constant labor to discover it, that we should be continually making the inquiry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Far from this; it is that state where one has not the least difficulty. One seems to know as by intuition, from time to time, what the Lord would have him do. The knowledge seems

to come perfectly natural and easy to him. It seems to come like his breath, without scarcely an effort, the way is so plain. It seems as though he could do scarcely different from what he does. He is held in his course by hands stronger than iron; love constrains as nothing else can. It does not seem to him he could have a doubt, everything is so manifest. Like the one who has the blessing of full assurance, he can say truly, I know. Others may doubt the propriety of his course, but he cannot. Light shines all around him. To one ignorant of this guidance it seems strange and unaccountable how he can know that his every step is directed by the Lord, as strange as the evidence of conversion to one in the darkness of nature. To him it is as clear as a sunbeam — the testimony is always at hand. One thing follows another in the course of divine providence, and he sees from time to time, at once, just the niche he is required to fill in the world. He is contented to be right there now, nor does he indulge in anxiety for the future. He has the assurance when the future arrives, that God will make it just as plain as he does the present.

Thus being delivered out of the hands of all his enemies, he serves God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of his life.

Religion is to him a present and a glorious reality. He lives in the region of certainty and blessedness. He knows whereof he affirms, and testifies what he sees and feels. A world of objects engages his attention, not observable to the rest part of community. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." The hand of God is seen in everything around him. The vices and wickedness of society distress and grieve him as they do no one else. If he has sufferings and burdens not endured by others, he has consolations and triumphs unknown to the rest part of the world. There is a grace and simplicity in his course which make even his enemies to be at peace with him. He seems to act naturally, and without the least constraint or effort. The reason is evident he is not in doubt as to what the Lord would have him do. He understands the will of God from moment to moment, as he needs direction. He has a degree of assurance

on this point, which perfectly confounds the fearful and doubting. Every one else may doubt, but such an one never. He speaks in positive terms of his state. He would deny the grace of God manifested to him if he did not. Every reader of the Bible cannot but observe that the language of assurance is the uniform language of those who speak therein. Our subject shows us why they speak in this manner, they had this testimony that they knew the will of God. The spirit of the Lord made everything manifest to them. They could not use the language of doubt. The same is still the case with all those who are led by the spirit of the Lord. They know as certainly what the will of God is, as they did, and why should they not, as they have the same spirit to enlighten and teach them. They want no audible voice to tell them what is the will of God. The knowledge is imparted to them in a way more satisfactory and convincing than any audible voice or visible sign could make it. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." Either of these the devil might counterfeit. But how can he come and commune with our spirit, witnessing

with it to the will of God? We do not say how far he may carry his dissimulation and deception, yet we have no hesitancy in affirming that this kind of testimony, of all others, is the most difficult to counterfeit, and there is no doubt, a point beyond which the devil is not permitted to go. It is not only then the most certain, but the safest and surest. Indeed, we suppose that there is no knowledge so perfect and positive; for it is witnessed by the spirit of the Lord. God himself becomes a witness. Is it then wonderful that those who are thus led, should speak in the most positive terms so as to offend many who have no such experience? They consider them presumptuous. They cannot conceive how one can know such things unless they have had some external manifestations of the will of God. Why are they not equally dissatisfied with the doctrine of full assurance? The same principle is involved in the one case as in the other. The spirit of God can just as easily give us a knowledge of his will, as he can give us a knowledge of our adoption, and it is certainly as important for us to know. Will any one say it is not as important to know what

to do, as to know what I am? Selfishness always anxious, when it has any interest on the subject, to know its character and doom, may doubt, but true benevolence is more solicitous to know what to do, than how it stands with God. "Charity seeketh not her own."

As such an one keeps in the highway of holiness, one duty comes up after another in its own place, so that there is no clashing between them. To such an one there is a natural order in events, one succeeding the other, each opening a field for action where every power of the mind is constantly employed. When one thing is done another is to be done, which occupies the next place. Thus one duty follows another in regular succession, so appropriately and manifestly that it would seem to be impossible not to understand the will of God, instead of its being difficult to know it. The traveller to Zion is hedged in on all sides in this way, nor is it easy for him to lose his way while the love of God fills his soul. It is not unscriptural nor a wrong use of terms to say, he *cannot* err while thus guided. He must first dispense with his guide, and this he may do. In the darkest

hour he has light in his soul which often increases as the external darkness grows thicker, the knowledge more certain as doubt prevails to the superficial observer. It may be that the apparent darkness only renders the light the more manifest. In either case he knows the will of God, and he has no doubt about it. Others may wonder at his course and think it unwise and strange, it may be, but he has no doubt, or fear. They cannot look within and see more than the light of day shining upon his path. How true the testimony of the divine word. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." He has glory in his soul brighter than the meridian sun. It is not possible to express the delight and satisfaction of one thus situated, whatever may be his external condition. Put him in prison and cut off every other source of comfort and blessedness, he has one infinitely above all others. The communication between God and his soul cannot be hindered; the blessed Spirit, the celestial dove descends into that cell and imparts the consolation and light needed. The prison becomes a palace, where the

rich in faith dwell; the dungeon is lighted up with heavenly fire. Hear Paul and Silas praying and singing praises at midnight, in the Philippian prison; see Bunyan following his Christian pilgrim to the very gate of the celestial city, in Bedford jail, and watch the triumphs of Madame Guyon within the walls of the Bastile. What more like heaven on earth? They rejoice in suffering the will of God.

Suppose one greatly tempted; he knows Christ can and will deliver him; that he is stronger than the strong man armed; that the tempter cannot go one step beyond God's permission. He could not touch a fraction of what Job had till God gave him permission, and then he could not touch his person until he had a second license. All this time Job's life was perfectly safe. He had no liberty to touch it. Nor dared the devils enter the herd of swine till they were permitted by the Son of God. Trusting, therefore, in the Lord Jesus, nothing can harm you. All the forces of heaven and earth are under His control. Let all the powers of darkness seize upon you at once, you know you are safe. If it had not been

best, for some reason or other, that you should be tempted, he would have prevented it. There is no sin in temptation, but the man is pronounced blessed who endures temptation. Then again, "Count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptation, knowing that the trial of your faith works patience." It would be difficult to describe all the various circumstances under which God may permit his children to be placed, to strengthen their faith and increase their love.

The way He leads them may be all dark without, and His providences may be directly opposite to the teachings of His spirit; everything may grow darker, farther removed from the promised blessing, and all may appear to be lost forever, yet light, yes, heavenly light, sustains and cheers the soul and keeps it patient by waiting till heaven's appointed time arrives. Abraham is not the only one who has had light in the midst of darkness and hope where every visible foundation of hope has been demolished, to cheer and support him during the long trial of his faith. This is what every child of God may expect, if he would understand the height and depth of Christian ex-

perience. Amid the severest trial, and under the greatest darkness, his knowledge of the divine will grow more clear and certain. Though the compass of divine providence may point the other way, the star of the divine Spirit leads him securely and safely along the heavenly road, where patriarchs and prophets walked, till he finds himself immersed in the very glories of heaven. He knows where he goes; for the Holy Ghost illumines his way. There is no deceiving him with this heavenly light. He has a better guide than all the eyes in the world; he is led by Him who sees the end from the beginning and knows all things.

Need we say that the whole way is a way of trial? For we are told beforehand that it is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. And they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. The way of faith lies right through the most rugged part of earth, often covered with darkness, and beset with dangers and difficulties. The difficulties rather lie without than within. The traveller, however, has an unerring guide, and he knows it. Not unfre-

quently he is astonished at himself. He can scarcely tell why or how he has so much assurance, how everthing appears so clear when so dark to sight. He is led by an unseen hand, who pours the light of day into his soul. He has no doubt what the Lord would have him do in all the relations and circumstances of life.

The grand aim of his life being right, his course is all plain and easy. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Thus conversion is spoken of as a change from darkness to light, and what is sanctification but *continued conversion*, i. e. keeping the eye single. Of course, this light increases, growing stronger and clearer as the convert advances in his heavenward course. He understands the ways of the Lord better. He finds the most he has to do, is to trust in the Lord, and everything seems to follow right along without an effort or a struggle. It seems strange to one not thus guided, with what ease and facility as well as certainty, one determines his course in life under the direction of the Spirit. He seems almost to know without thinking, and to act without doing. At least, there seems to be

none of the effort and struggle which characterizes one who walks by sight. The secret of the whole is, God guides, and the traveller knows it, and consequently dismisses all anxiety about his course. Like the blind, who gives himself up to the control of his guide, he has only to follow where he leads the way. He is not all the while distrusting him, for fear he will desert him or lead him into dangers and trouble. He dismisses all fear and goes when or where his guide directs. He believes he is able and willing to guide him, and he doubts not but that he does. The witness within testifies to this, and on he goes, blind as he is. Such is the condition of one who trusts implicitly in God. He may be thrown into confusion for a moment, by the unexpectedness of events, but he soon falls back upon the unfailing arm of his guide. To such an one, it seems strange to hear any doubting this knowledge as the sinner doubts the testimony of the convert. He can scarcely see where or how he has come to this knowledge, and yet he says he knows he has passed from death unto life. In the same language, the Christian traveller speaks of his state.

He knows he pleases God, and it is not in the power of earth or hell to shake him in this knowledge. Like Job, he stands to his integrity, though every friend he has in the world becomes his accuser. Such is the nature of this knowledge about which we are writing. The person of whom we say this, would as soon doubt his own existence as to doubt this knowledge. It is knowledge of the most substantial character, testified to by the Spirit of the Lord, and by our own consciousness, better than any knowledge we gain through the medium of the senses, as there is less liability to deception. The language of assurance is therefore proper as well as scriptural, and no other would express the true state of the mind. We never should shrink from uttering the truth, though some may be offended by it. If the language of Scripture gives offence, it is no reason against using it, though we should do what we can to have it understood correctly.

We suppose this manifestation of God's will to us, may be something like the communications of spirit with spirit, in the coming world. There are no visible signs, but knowledge is imparted as

really and as substantially as was ever communicated through the medium of the senses. The one knows what the other thinks with the greatest ease, and with the utmost precision, without the gross medium of flesh. There is an *intermingling* of spirit with spirit (we use this word for the want of a better one to express our meaning; we have borrowed this from the material world) by which the will of the one is perfectly manifest to the other. There seems to be no effort or difficulty in understanding each other. It is in some such way that God manifests his will to those with whom he abides. The knowledge comes we can hardly tell how, for our knowledge of the means of intercourse, purely spiritual, is very limited, and imperfect. We have no more doubt of its reality than though we heard a voice, or saw a sign. We have a knowledge of our own existence, independent of any physical organism; a spirit cannot exist without consciousness. It is thus with this spiritual life; its very existence from day to day is attended with this very consciousness, so that we can truly say we know. And what is this spiritual life, but the result of

God's approbation, and the consciousness of having done the will of God? This cannot be without a knowledge of his will. We must know it, to do it. A right moral act must be an intelligent one, and this knowledge is imparted in some such way as we have suggested. However imparted, it is as real as any knowledge we ever possessed, and upon it we build our hopes for this and the coming world. Not unfrequently, this very assurance increases, as the present world recedes from our view.

CHAPTER III.

CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCES OF THE WILL OF GOD TO THE SOUL.

SECTION I.

THE WORD OF GOD AFFORDS CORROBORATIVE TESTIMONY.

Though it does not minutely describe every inch of ground over which the traveller is to pass, yet it presents way-marks to guide him Zion-ward. No step must be taken contrary to its plain directions. The diligent reader of the Bible, and every one thus guided will be such, will find great help in perusing the word of life. He is in that state which fits him to understand and apply its principles to all the relations and avocations of life. He discovers meaning and force where the ordinary reader finds none. The promises mean infinitely more than they used to; they are his heritage. He finds light where once he found darkness. How little do people understand the

import of the law of God till they obey and possess its spirit. The spiritual can only discern the things of the Spirit. To comprehend, then, fully the meaning of God's truth, we must have the *same mind* as the Spirit which inspired the word. In this state the Bible will throw a fund of light in our path, behind and before, for all time past, present, and future. Its instruction will come in to confirm, and strengthen us in the knowledge of the divine will. It is itself an outward manifestation, confirmatory of the inward teachings of God's spirit.

As such, the Bible must be a most precious and interesting book to every traveller in the highway of holiness. It is one of the principal external means which the spirit of God uses in making known his will, and in assuring us of that knowledge.

How clear and precious the word of life appears to one when first brought into the light of the gospel! Let him remain here, and the light will be continually increasing. The pages of sacred writ will grow more and more luminous. Many passages will appear new, and as having a

meaning not before discoverable. The idea that those who are led by the Spirit do not need the written word, is certainly a very wrong one. The truth is, it is peculiarly precious to such. "How love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day." The teachings of the Spirit, instead of dispensing with the word, throw light and glory around the sacred volume, and invest it with an interest and authority not before realized. "And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." Wherever the spirit of the Lord is, there his word is always most highly prized, showing most conclusively that the Spirit uses the word as an auxilliary in making known the will of God. Objective truths make a stronger and deeper impression upon many minds than when presented in any other way. How often does the Spirit use the promises of the Bible to cheer and comfort the afflicted, to encourage the desponding, to enlighten the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, and fill the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If it thus uses the promises, why not the commands and precepts of the divine word in making known God's will as we

need to have it manifested to us? This it does by applying them to our present condition, and by enlightening the mind in respect to them, so that we may easily comprehend their meaning. Without this, the word would be very inadequate to our wants.

How often has the question been made by the readers of the Bible, Why is so much in this book obscure? Why is it so silent on many points, which, above all others, we would understand, when it would have been so easy for God to have made all clear? Why does not the Bible give more light? We think that we have a satisfactory answer to such questions in our subject. The deficiency is abundantly supplied by the character and office of the teacher employed to expound and apply the word; the text book is sufficient with such a teacher. The Spirit applies these commands and precepts, these promises, &c., to all the varied circumstances of human existence. It writes the whole on the mind, and engraves it upon the heart. It is just as though we had a volume written out for ourselves individually, a chart adapted to the part of the ocean of

life through which we are passing, with all the rocks, shoals, quicksands, whirlpools, currents, winds, &c., all marked out for our use; rather we have a skilful pilot on board to guide us all the way through till we reach the haven of everlasting rest, and enter the port with songs of triumph. To our mind, this explanation is most satisfactory and conclusive. If the word is not minute enough for our wants, the Spirit is; for that shall guide us into all truth, and bring all things to our remembrance. By this unction much other teaching can be dispensed with, as this is so much more clear and satisfactory. Thus we can say to all those who complain of the want of definiteness in the word of God, if you will yield yourselves to the teachings of the Spirit you shall know the minutest duties and provisions of the gospel. You will find every want supplied and every necessity met. Here is just what every one needs, and a sufficiency for all.

SECTION II.

THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, WHEN IT HAS TIME TO SPEAK, CORROBORATES THE TEACHINGS OF THE SPIRIT IN MAKING KNOWN THE WILL OF GOD.

Most people cannot wait to have divine providence speak *decisively* on a given point. They must catch the first apparent indications, and declare them decisive and positive. Time passes, and almost without exciting the least attention, the whole is clearly reversed. In this way, people often read the instructions of divine providence very incorrectly. They have no patience. This has generally been the case in the reformatory movements of the world. Every progressive improvement has portended a general disaster, in the view of most who see the change going on, till at length it has been generally hailed as the harbinger of the good time coming. This has been acted over and over again, and will be while people are governed only by present appearances. In this way, judging from one's course, you might think he was doing anything else but the will of God. The whole community may be stirred up against him, and regard him as the worst of men.

A few years pass, and he is hailed as the pioneer of a most glorious reform, and by-and-by he is canonized in the church. 1 Cor. iv. 3: "But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self; for I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." Paul relied solely on the testimony which he received of the Lord. Here is a complete emptying of self, and the enthronement of God upon the judgment seat. And so it is with all those who walk in the Spirit. As the will of God often runs counter to the practices and feelings of the community, who would be so likely to be misjudged, and misrepresented as one controled by the will of God? The sentiment of the world has always been in direct opposition to it. Scarcely one knew God when manifested in flesh. There were more who took Him to be a devil, than there were who received Him as the Messiah. Probably a thousand to one. They thought He acted like the devil, even the prince among devils. And it is probable, now, if Christ should again come on earth but few would know Him.

Luke xviii. 8: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth." He would be regarded as a wicked man, and He would be mobbed out of our cities and villages. It is not even likely that He would be admitted into many churches. Why this? because the sentiment and character of the world are directly opposite to truth and righteousness.

They scarcely knew God when manifested in the flesh, and they are equally ignorant of His will, or the course of a life thus controlled. Hence, the most godly, the best spirits of every age have been opposed and persecuted, till by-and-by the providence of God has corrected the verdict of the world, and it has done honor to the very names it had maligned.

Future generations have built and garnished their sepulchres.

Living virtue is not generally known, for the very reason that people are wont to be governed by present appearances. In this way they read the book of divine providence incorrectly, and are ever making mistakes.

The providence of God thus corroborates His

will, as manifested to those who do it, as the Spirit interprets it to them. They even read its testimony as every leaf is turned over. The very opposition of the world is demonstrative evidence to them that they are doing the will of God. "If the world hate you, ye know it hated Me before it hated you." If God, manifested in flesh, was thus condemned, shall not the personification of His will in the lives of His children be condemned? Thus one led by the spirit of God reads the testimony of His providence as confirmatory of the knowledge received by His Spirit. It is to him corroborative evidence of the knowledge of God's will. And it is even so in the eyes of the world, when time has been allowed to give its decisive verdict.

As God governs the world, no one will deny but that his providential administration must afford peculiar facilities for ascertaining His will, especially to one who has the illumination and guidance of His Spirit in watching it. As the providences of God are under the direct control of His Spirit, they may be regarded as the exponent of His will, and often are an expression of

it right before the eye, so that we just see what we are to do apparently without any other guide. And it is in this way that people deify providence as a kind of omnipresent God, (we mean the external circumstances attending it), and speak of being guided by it. They cannot see as there is any need of supposing an unseen agent communicating light and truth to the mind, while in their view, we have a sufficient guide in the indications of providence.

Like the word, independent of the Spirit's guidance, it is liable to be misinterpreted and misapplied, and hence requires an active, present agent to understand the will of God as there expressed. So we need the same guide in understanding the teachings of His providence, and can no more dispense with it than we can in applying the word.

It might be argued, as the Spirit is the author of divine providence, that it is itself a sufficient expression of His will, but this argument would just as readily set aside its teachings in understanding the Bible. The word is certainly as explicit and as easy to be understood as the providence of God.

Both come in as corroborative evidence of God's will, but not the decisive and positive testimony, or direct witness of it in all the circumstances which those have, who have received the unction of the Spirit. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit," it is not the word nor providence which testifies, but the Spirit. It uses them as auxiliaries in making known the will of God, but it must itself speak to the soul, to make the knowledge sure and available. Its affirmations or prohibitions are positive and clear. It would seem to one, thus guided, as though no one could misunderstand them. The way is as clear as a sunbeam. In doing this, the providences of God are not overlooked; they are watched with the keenest eye, and all due attention is paid to them in deciding one's course. And under the guidance of the Spirit, they are made available as they could not be in any other way. Those led by the Spirit possess great advantages in reading divine providences.

SECTION III.

THE GODLY AND CONSISTENT LIVES OF THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT WOULD BE CORROBORATIVE TESTIMONY TO THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S WILL TO THEM.

Indeed, if this was wanting, any pretension to knowing and doing the will of God, would be vain and false. Living in violation of any precept of the gospel, or neglecting any of its manifest requirements, would be decisive evidence against the truth of any such profession. One thus led, must be an honest man, a truthful man, a self-denying humble, devout,—in one word, a benevolent man. Any obliquity in the life, places one without the pale of the promise, that he shall know the will of God. In order to know and do his will, there must be the fruit of the Spirit, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." "If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." It will follow, then, that any of the works of the flesh, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings,

murders, drunkenness, revellings," are positive evidence against this guidance. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

The life must be in conformity with the spirit of God, or it is not in accordance with the will of God, and consequently if the life be wrong, it is demonstration that the will of God is not manifested to such. They cannot have the testimony that they please God. They may claim all the illuminations in the world, but the life denies it. The teachings of the Spirit are never contrary to the word and law of God. Here every one has a very good test of the character of the manifestations which he thinks he enjoys.

And so have others a test, who are acquainted with his life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If any finds himself swayed by principles and influenced by motives inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, he has no right to claim the manifestation of God's will, in his works or ways. More likely Satan has changed himself into an angel of light. There is no other experience he will be so likely to counterfeit as this, on

account of its intrinsic value. What oftentimes passes for Christian experience is not worth counterfeiting. Who ever undertakes to counterfeit a copper coin? It is the eagle, the sovereign, that excites the covetousness of the counterfeiter. It will pay; it is worth the trouble.

It is thus with the highest Christian experience. When a genuine coin of this kind gets into circulation, the cupidity of hundreds is awakened to possess it. We might expect more counterfeits here than anywhere else, on account of its intrinsic value. Many are ready to confess that they have it while they have none of the true evidence which characterizes this state, and some, while their own lives contradict the confession of their lips.

The lives of those who are led by the Spirit are not merely negative. They are eminently positive in their character and testimony. True godliness marks her servants. The love of Christ cannot well be concealed. People who have never possessed it, may imagine that they can keep it to themselves, but those who have it, declare it on all proper occasions. It is the most diffusive thing

in the world. "If these hold their peace the stones will cry out." Nothing could deter primitive Christians from making it known. The fear of death had no power to deter them from manifesting their love for Christ. For his sake they went to prison and to death. Nor has this love changed; but where it really exists it will show itself, especially where one receives this full unction. There is always a disposition to speak of their triumphs. In doing so, they do not exalt themselves but magnify the grace of Christ. It is not egotism, but praise to the great Redeemer. It is what Christ is doing for them. When Paul speaks of his triumphs it is not extolling himself but his dear Saviour. "By the grace of God I am what I am." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." There is something marked and positive in such a life. It is characterized with the annihilation of self and with supreme love to the adorable Redeemer.

We do not say that every one, nor even most would acknowledge such to be the character of one wholly consecrated to God. It might be con-

sidered by the community to be anything else than this. The best men on earth have been greatly misrepresented and their motives impugned. They have been denounced as the worst of men. The lives of such, however, commend them to the consciences of men. They may oppose and persecute them, but there is a secret conviction within that they are right. There is a manifest honesty and sincerity in their deportment and a confidence in their integrity and righteousness, which confounds their adversaries. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

The intrepidity and faith of Luther made the whole papal world tremble. They felt weak before a man of such faith and prayer. Their consciences responded to the truthful appeals he uttered. So it is with all those who live godly in Christ Jesus. Their consistent and devoted lives produce conviction, and this arouses the latent enmity of their hearts. When we say this, we would not ignore the fact that there is a peculiar

grace and wisdom in the lives of such, to stop the mouths of gainsayers. They do not provoke unnecessary opposition. Their inoffensive manners and meek and quiet spirit silence the cavils of enemies. "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

There is a great power in a truly godly life, to subdue the opposition of the wicked. The enemies of Christ dared not touch him. Even the hardy soldiers that were sent to bring him, returned without him, saying, "Never man spake like this man." His gentle spirit and unassuming dignity perfectly overawed them. So it is with those who possess his spirit.

All these qualities however do not secure them from the strongest and most bitter opposition. They did not the Saviour, nor will they those who follow him and abide in him. It is not difficult to conceive of a life controlled and moulded by the spirit of God. To be sure, there would be a difference in the impressions of men on this point.

Some would describe one more like an angel, carrying himself above all the little concerns of

life, and breathing an atmosphere unlike the gross material which encircles our globe. He can mingle with people only in their highest and best aspirations, when they are blessed with visions of heavenly glory. Most would not fail to take the life of Christ in the flesh as a pattern from which to conceive their ideal of this man. They would see him in the innocence of childhood and youth, endeared and cherished in the bosom of the family, engaged in all its little concerns, obedient and loving; then in the innocence of manhood, accompanying his reputed father, with the square and compass about the village of Nazareth, laboring day after day as a mechanic; and lastly, as a public minister, publishing salvation, and performing works of mercy and benevolence wherever he went. "Harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." As we have before said, a life formed on this model, might not meet the general expectations of the world in any, much less in all its parts and in all the circumstances in which one might be placed. No one might be fully satisfied while the minds of people are so vague on this point, and while every one has some peculiar notion of his

own to subserve. Though moving in the humblest sphere, we do not believe such a life would pass unobserved. There would be a heavenly influence gathered about that dwelling, disseminating life and light abroad, amid surrounding darkness. There might be no great noise and profession in the work, yet the influence would be no less powerful and extensive, though noiseless and silent. Such a life would abound in deeds of charity and mercy; the poor are not neglected, and sinners pass not by unwarned or uncared for. Every cause is espoused and cherished which has the amelioration and good of man in view, and which allies him to his Lord, in the great work of human redemption. Humility will be a prominent feature in such a character. Self abandonment will appear conspicuous in the life. It is a state of entire dependence upon another for every temporal and spiritual favor. As self is crucified, the present life begins, continues and ends with God; "he is all, and in all." There is no self-gratulation here, as though he was a peculiar favorite of heaven, but a great and abiding sense of unworthiness that God should of his infinite mercy so

distinguish him by his grace. He feels as though he was one of the least in the kingdom of Christ, and is amazed that God should so bless him with his glorious presence and love. He cannot but abase himself before the Lord for such exalted privileges. His acknowledgments of God's distinguishing goodness and wonderful manifestations to his soul are sometimes regarded as self-exaltation and pride, but they are evidence of the very opposite in a spiritual mind; inasmuch as they exalt God, as the all sufficient and unfailing support of such a life. He ascribes all his triumphs to the Lamb.

He has but to lie in the hands of infinite grace and wonder and adore. Hear his confession. "By the grace of God I am what I am." Benevolence would be a prominent characteristic in such a life; that is, supreme love to God and impartial love to man. It is a sincere and abiding purpose to seek the highest good of all. It includes all men in its kind regards, enemies as well as friends, strangers and foreigners, as well as the home born. No one can lay any claim to this state who neglects or overlooks the welfare of one.

The very purpose to disregard the interests of that one is evidence of malevolence, and presents an outline in the image wholly at variance with the divine original. It looks dreadfully to see one making great professions of goodness, and yet at the same time not only indifferent, but positively inimical to the interests of a portion of God's creatures. True benevolence has no exceptions in its regards, no more than God himself. There must be an entire devotion to the best interests of the universe in such a life. It is more than an occasional exhibition of benevolence, a vein of goodness, a streak of good will, it is an abiding state of the mind, an entire committal of one's powers to the highest good of universal being.

Self-denial would be another prominent feature in a life modelled after this sort. This is pre-supposed in a life of benevolence. Benevolence and selfishness are opposites, one or the other prevails and gives character to our whole course of life. Upon this very point hinges salvation. Self-denial is the only way to heaven. "He that would save his life shall lose it; but he that would lose his life for my sake, the same shall find

it." All heaven acts on this principle, and no one can possess its spirit without doing the same, nor can he have any assurance of the divine will, while conscious he is supremely selfish. Such a life as we have described would therefore be corroborative evidence that one knows the will of God, and an assurance to him of that knowledge.

Again such a life would be often characterized by great temptations and severe trials. Some have an impression that it is exempt from both trials and temptations; a state of constant triumph and glory. It is so in one sense, because there are conflicts overcome and temptations endured. The consequence is triumph, and as they always come off more than conquerors from the field of conflict, it is constant triumph. But it is triumph in the midst of conflict, it is victory in the midst of contest.

Think not that such a life is free from trial. Why it is a state of self-crucifixion, a dying unto self. We might expect greater trials here than anywhere else, and at the same time greater triumphs; every conflict only becomes the occasion of another triumph. You that court ease and

sluggishness should not think of entering this state, for you will soon get tired of it, and prove a deserter, and have to be treated such in the army of the living God. No, we tell you to begin with, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," and if you cannot endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ you should not think of enlisting in this service. We glory in the *cross* of Christ.

You should remember that no one was ever more powerfully tempted than the Son of God in his state of humiliation. He was tempted and tried in every possible way, and yet he triumphed in God continually. If our Saviour was thus tried, why should we expect those who bear his image and possess his spirit to be exempt from trials? It is enough for the disciple if he be as his Lord. One in this state may be called to endure great privations, to suffer great reproach, to have his motives impugned, his works condemned, and his character vilified. For a season he may be in great heaviness through manifold

temptations. These very trials and conflicts only corroborate the knowledge of God's will as manifested to him. They are attended with the strongest assurance of the divine favor, and with the clearest manifestations of His will. They have no more doubt than they have of God's existence what his will is, and they rejoice in it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The brightest examples of virtue, the greatest ornaments of the church have been those who have gone through great tribulation to their crown of glory, and have passed through floods and flames to their mansions in the skies. They rejoiced in the divine will while living, and they died in the faith and triumph of the gospel.

PART V.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

I.—THIS VIEW MAKES EFFORT AND STUDY IN UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD FROM HIS WORD, AND PROVIDENCE UNNECESSARY, AND THEREFORE ENCOURAGES INDOLENCE.

The answer to this objection has already been anticipated. It is founded upon utter ignorance of the way in which God manifests his will. He makes it known through our intelligence, and thus leads us to improve every means within our power. Nothing could tend to awaken such desire and activity, as well as delight in perusing the word of God, and watching the developments of his providence. They are no longer unintelligible and dark. The witness of the Spirit makes their pages luminous. They are understood now as they could not be without. One of the principal offices of the Spirit is to use these instrumentalities in making known the divine will. Instead of dispensing with them, it influences us to use them, and enables us to understand them. It

therefore encourages diligence in the use of all those means, and secures it by creating a love for them. There is no difficulty in getting people to do what they love to do. You cannot keep them from it. Hear the expression of one thus led by the spirit of God, the man after God's own heart, and who should do all his will. "How love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day." The one who knows and does the will of God will be the most diligent student and the most persevering after truth. The Spirit wakes up his mind and creates a desire for knowledge.

II.—THE MANY CAUTIONS FOUND IN THE WORD OF GOD AGAINST BEING DECEIVED ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THE ASSURANCE OR DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE HERE CLAIMED.

This objection bears equally against the doctrine of full assurance, and of the saint's final perseverance, doctrines which are held peculiarly dear by the great body of evangelical Christians. We have nowhere claimed a greater assurance or degree of knowledge. We have only asked the same knowledge of the will of God as they do of their adoption. The same witnesses testify, and we only ask the same degree of confidence in their

testimony. They are just as competent to testify in the one case as in the other, and we have proved from the word of God that they do testify in the one case as much as in the other. And if the objection amounts to anything, it bears equally strong against the existence of all Christian experience.

The final perseverance of the saints is held as absolutely certain, and yet there are many warnings and exhortations against apostacy in every part of God's word. A caution meets the Christian at every turn, as though he might stumble and perish forever. How is the objection met?

The cautions are designed to accomplish the very object for which we have argued, that is, the very assurance herein maintained, just as the warnings against apostacy are designed to secure the saint's perseverance unto salvation and do secure it.

Here are guards and cautions against deception found in every part of this work. The conditions of knowing the will of God are so many guards, the word and providence of God furnish others, and if anything else is needed, the life is the

touchstone to determine the nature of the assurance. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Christian assurance has not more guards, or a better protection against deception. It is true men may take darkness for light, and err most egregiously in their impressions, but this does not disprove the testimony of God's word. Cautions are given to make us doubly sure what the will of God is. They guard us against taking that as evidence which is by no means conclusive. It would seem as though it was God's design to make our assurance as strong as possible. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation or assurance," &c.

III.—DECEPTION MUST BE DREADFULLY DISASTROUS.

We admit it, and believe that we cannot overrate the direful consequences of being deceived. Who can tell the worth of the soul, and the loss which deception may occasion? But is there not the same danger in professing the faith of assurance, or simply conversion? And whoever

thought of condemning such a profession, because deception might be fatal? You would rather aim to have the assurance real and certain. You present the dangers to have them avoided, and to have one sure that he has escaped them, and thus make assurance doubly sure.

We admit, also, that his life may have a very injurious influence upon community, if he is deceived. He may become a great stumbling block by the inconsistency of his life. More, we admit that many have not only brought this truth into contempt by their ungodly lives, but they have greatly prejudiced community against religion altogether.

And so may the inconsistent lives of those who profess conversion. The community have the same means of judging of the genuineness of their profession. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Here you have a test in the one case as in the other. Great injury has been done the doctrine of sanctification as well as regeneration by professing it, while the life gave the lie to the lips.

We have already said we might expect more

counterfeiting here than anywhere else, owing to the value of the coin. Many will catch a few ideas on the subject and begin to defend it, and then profess it, who have never been taught of God, and who have none of the evidences here presented. They do immense injury, and bring the precious truth into great contempt. In every age of the church, there always have been such instances, and thereby many have been offended. Fools themselves in Bible language, they have suffered themselves to be duped by fools.

IV.—THE DOCTRINE TENDS TO FANATICISM.

This we deny, and there cannot be shown the shadow of a reason to support this objection. It is as far removed from fanaticism as possible. Where one is led by the spirit of the Lord, he must present a perfectly well balanced character, yielding the fruit of the Spirit in one harmonious cluster. Does walking in the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit tend to fanaticism? None will pretend that.

But says the objector, May not a person run into every kind of fanaticism and disorder, and

claim to be guided by the will of God, and thus strengthen himself in error by claiming the guidance of heaven? This, we doubt not, has been done, and may be done. But it is only the perversion of the doctrine, making false pretences. It has no affinity with the true doctrine. We admit the perversion of a very important doctrine is attended with more disastrous consequences, than the perversion of one less important. Hence, we might expect the perversion of this would be fraught with the greatest mischief to the souls of men.

Men may, under the impression that they are led by the spirit of God, run into every kind of extravagance and wickedness; trample upon the laws and institutions of God, and commit every possible crime; yes, break up the very foundations of society, and substitute anarchy and crime in their place. Every form of iniquity may be practiced in this way.

But will you hold this doctrine responsible, or those who dare take the responsibility of perverting it to their own vile and iniquitous purposes? If the former, we do not see but that every doc-

trine of the Bible will come under condemnation; for they have all been terribly perverted at times, to the great damage of souls. Take the doctrine of divine sovereignty, election, perseverance, &c.

According to this rule, we do not see but that the law and government of God will be condemned in the same category. It will not be denied, but that they have been perverted to the worst of purposes. You hold those responsible for this who have so wickedly and daringly done the deed. Why, then should they not be responsible who have perverted this most precious truth? Shall we be afraid of it, because wicked men, under the cloak of religion, have made such use of it? Good men ought to gather around it, defend, and practice it, and thus wrest it from its unhallowed use. Every Christian knows it is just what he needs, it is what he daily prays for, why should he then hesitate in availing himself of this precious privilege? If he needs it, why has he not a right to expect to find it in the gospel, since provision is there made for all our wants? Hence, we have argued *a priori* that it is found there. If men will run wild in view of the wonderful provisions

of the gospel, shall we throw them away? If men will sometimes cut their throats, shall we dispense with knives? If men sometimes die of gluttony, shall we therefore dispense with food? Then we will not dispense with a sure guide, because men professing to have it sometimes make shipwreck. It becomes us to look well to our ways, but enjoying the guidance of the Spirit we need not fear.

Sometimes because dangerous error seems very much like the truth, the truth is rejected and a blessing lost. It often happens that the *most precious truth lies right alongside the most dangerous error.* Christian rest lies by the side of dead quietism, the true doctrine of dependence, by that of antinomianism and Christian freedom by the side of lawlessness. In such cases shall we throw away the truth because error looks like it? No. Let us seek the guidance of the Spirit in discriminating truth from error. Here we find the need of the very guidance we have contended for. The Spirit to teach us and guide us into all truth. Why then shall we not avail ourselves of every means and facility for knowing and doing

the will of God, with the assurance that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord? In this course we have the assurance that our path shall shine more and more unto the perfect day, while the way of the wicked shall be as darkness and they know not at what they stumble. Fanaticism is blind, while the assurance and knowledge we maintain is sure and clear, minutely pointing out the path of life to those who walk in the ways of OBEDIENCE. The truth is, no one has a safe guide but this. Every other one may err, may wander and stumble, but this one shall know and walk in the truth.

V.—THIS IS THE OLD DOCTRINE OF INFALLIBILITY, NEW VAMPED AND NEW DRESSED, PROFESSED BY THE POPE AND MAINTAINED TO THE GREAT ANNOYANCE OF CHRISTENDOM.

We do not think it is a sufficient reason to reject a doctrine because it is held by the Pope. No one doubts but that he has many doctrines of the Bible in his creed. If he had nothing but error in it his power would not be so dreadful, nor his influence so fatal.

But we are not aware that this doctrine has a single feature in common with the Pope's claim to

infallibility. He professes to derive his claim from his position as the successor to the chair of St. Peter, as the Jews supposed they would be saved from their relation to Abraham. We are not aware that he makes the least profession of the grace here maintained. Besides, if he did, the lives of most of the Popes would deny their profession. How few of them have known even the grace of conversion, to say nothing of sanctification?

We suppose, however, it is not the design of the objector to connect this doctrine with papacy. It is the claim of infallible knowledge that he opposes the assurance here maintained, which contains the strength of this objection. And yet we are not aware that this doctrine makes any stronger claim to infallibility than the doctrine of assurance, as maintained by Evangelical Christians. They believe one may know, and perhaps we should not express it too strongly if we should say, infallibly know, know beyond all doubt, that they are the children of God. This doctrine claims nothing more in knowing the will of God. It claims that we may know beyond a doubt what

is the will of God in a given case, and the evidence is the same in the one case as in the other. Where is the difference? We know some people are fond of throwing odium upon a doctrine they do not believe, by applying to it the worst name they can find. For this very reason the cry of infallibility is raised to prejudice the minds of people against this truth. With most Christians the knowledge of this doctrine as here maintained is limited, and perhaps from experience they know nothing about it. Prejudice once awakened in this manner will preclude the possibility of an impartial examination, if any at all. In this way truth has often been opposed and error propagated. "Wo unto you that call evil good and good evil."

It seems to us that the humble, sincere Christian can appreciate our answer at once. We would inquire of such, do you know you have passed from death unto life, and most any one would suppose that the new man in Christ Jesus ought to understand this change, from *death* to *life*.

The answer is, "I do." "How do you know

it?" When you have answered this you have probably given the answer we should to the question, How do you know the will of God? And has the cry of infallibility ever been raised against the doctrine of full assurance? Yet the ground is taken that we may know beyond a doubt that we are Christians, and we do not know but that this means, though not generally expressed, infallible, absolute knowledge. You say there can be no mistake about it. You know it as certainly as you do your own existence. Paul and Job express themselves as positively. It is common with all the ancient people of God, and has been with many in the church, in every age.

We ask for no more certain knowledge, nor for a stronger assurance in respect to the manifestations of God's will from time to time, as each juncture arrives. It is far from claiming infallibility for man. It throws him completely off from himself and leaves him to depend alone upon the testimony of God. He dare not rely on his own judgment in respect to himself, but he depends upon the testimony of God. It annihilates self and enthrones God upon the heart. Is this claim-

ing infailibility for man, when it completely strips him of every garment of self-righteousness, and lays him over upon the arm of the infinite God for support? How? If there is any infallibility about it, it must be the testimony of God vouchsafed to us by the illumination of his spirit. And is there any thing alarming in the idea that God can make a thing clear to our minds, infallibly certain, if you please? Is not the whole of our religion based upon the truth that he has? Take away the certainty of the truth of divine revelation, and where are we? We are turned over to blank skepticism, or to blind and hopeless atheism. Do you believe the truth of the Bible is infallibly certain? God has then made some things infallibly certain to us. Why may he not as easily make others so? And is it not this certainty which supports our faith and hope? Without it what would become of the spiritual life? Is not then, this assurance perfectly in character with all the other arrangements whereby our salvation is secured, and our spiritual life sustained? There can be no objection then, to the doctrine, from this source unless the whole Bible is a fabrication, and the

Christian religion false, our hope vain, and we yet in our sins. For the objection lies as much against the whole as against this part.

But we rejoice in the certainty of Divine revelation, in the absolute assurance we have of its truth; it is the sheet anchor of our hope, and the sure realization of our future triumphs. In the same manner we rejoice to know from day to day, the will of the Lord in respect to us, and to have this testimony that we please God.

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